

Portugal clinches World Youth Cup

RIYADH (AP) — Portugal ended their first major soccer title by beating Nigeria 2-1 in the World Youth Championship final Friday. Nigeria, four-time African champions and third in Moscow in the 1985 tournament, found the Portuguese more than a match in speed and technique. In the first 10 minutes Nigeria's jittery defense conceded six corners before calm was restored and play switched rapidly from end to end with each threatened attack giving way to a rapid counter. Jose Pinto in a scintillating solo run beat four defenders but Nigerian goalkeeper Emeka Anasidi had no difficulty parrying his weak shot. Portuguese keeper Jose Bizarro was in action to ward off three Nigerian scoring chances. Portugal broke through a minute before the interval when Abel Silva, unmarked in the penalty area, volleyed home a low cross. The Nigerians swarmed into the attack in the second half but three corners in as many minutes and it was the turn of the Portuguese to go to the attack. But Jorge Costa made amends for wanting a special minute earlier when he put the issue beyond doubt in the 77th minute by firing a hard drive into the left-hand corner after a solo run.

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Jordan will overcome its financial difficulties

Rifai: No peace except through conference after Security Council accord

AMMAN (Petra) — The Middle East conflict could be settled peacefully only through an international peace conference which should be convened after consultations and agreement among the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, Prime Minister Zaid Rifai has said.

The United States has a major role to play in changing the Israeli attitude when such an agreement is reached, Rifai was quoted as saying in an interview published Friday in the London-based Al Sharq Al Awsat daily.

Rifai said all obstacles on the Arab side had been removed and that the only impediment in convening an international peace conference was Israel's rejection of the idea.

The prime minister said His Majesty King's preoccupation to remove all inter-Arab differences and enhance Arab solidarity was behind the efforts exerted by the King on the Arab scene.

Rifai said Jordan's decision to sever legal and administrative links with the occupied West Bank was designed to highlight the Palestinian identity and enable the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), the sole

legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, to perform its full role without any duplication of representation.

Jordan's move also aimed at demonstrating to the whole world the support that the Kingdom provides to the Palestinians to enable them to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination on their national soil, Rifai told Al Sharq Al Awsat.

Jordan's relations with the PLO at their best and based on confidence and common interest in cooperation to serve the Palestinian cause and enable the Palestinians to achieve their national goals, the prime minister said.

Rifai described the economic situation in Jordan as a financial crisis rather than an economic one and attributed it to the failure on the part of some Arab countries to meet their financial

obligations to the Kingdom. Saudi Arabia was the only country to have met the obligation in full, he noted. The prime minister expressed confidence that Jordan would surpass the difficult stage and the Jordanian dinar would regain its strength in a matter of seven to ten days and reach an actually balanced level against the dollar, reflecting its genuine value rather than the rate imposed by the government.

The prime minister said the previous exchange rate of the dinar was unrealistic and very high, "something which caused us lots of problems which had their hearings on our foreign currency reserves... it also affected the ability of our industries to compete in the foreign market and therefore we decided to float the exchange rate of the dinar."

Rifai also referred to malpractices on the part of moneychangers, "who started increasing and decreasing the exchange rates with no relation to the supply and demand situation, thus causing market speculation."

"We interfered at this stage to end such speculation and to stabilise the dinar's exchange rate without any intervention on the part of the central bank," Rifai said.

The prime minister rejected as

baseless suggestions that Jordan's decision to sever formal links with the West Bank had contributed to the difficult economic situation. "The PLO had no deposits in Jordanian banks," he said. "Even if it did have, such amounts belonged to individuals and institutions as deposits," he said.

Rifai also rejected groundless suggestions that an alleged decrease in expatriate remittances had aggravated the problem.

Rifai confirmed that there was a relation between the financial situation in the occupied West Bank and Jordan since the currency in circulation in the West Bank is the Jordanian dinar and the citizens' deposits are also in dinar.

"Due to the uprising, which we hope will continue, people in occupied West Bank started withdrawing from their deposits because of the lack of sufficient support caused by Israeli practices and the Israeli ban on the flow of funds to them," he said. "Therefore, the supply of the dinar has exceeded demand and affected the value of the dinar," Rifai said.

Asked if the recent Royal Decree ordering the release of pris-

(Continued on page 2)

Arafat defends Palestinian right to hit when attacked by Israel

ABU DHABI (Agencies) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat said Friday PLO fighters would continue to strike back at Israel when it attacks their refugee camps, rejecting U.S. warnings that recent clashes in South Lebanon could harm the PLO-U.S. dialogue.

He also disclosed at a news conference that Soviet mediation between his leadership and Israel has developed into "a kind of indirect talks" over a Middle East peace settlement.

"We did not say that we will stop defending our refugee camps, towns and cities which are daily raided or bombed by the Israeli army," said Arafat.

"Do they expect me to issue orders for our forces in Lebanon to stop defending their children, women and camps?" Arafat told reporters.

Israel has said attempted cross border raids by fighters from Lebanon, such as an attack Thursday by a faction of the PLO, violate Arafat's renunciation of terrorism last December. Washington has said that such raids undercut its dialogue with

the PLO, which resumed in December after a 13-year break.

The PLO leader said Israel planned an offensive into Lebanon to ease the pressure on its government from the 14-month-old uprising in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

He reiterated that the PLO continued to have contacts with Israel through intermediaries for a ceasefire in Lebanon. Israeli officials have denied any such negotiations.

"I have to remind the United States that at a time when Israel is urging them to take a stand against the PLO, (Israel's) military leadership is asking us to return to the 1981 ceasefire in Lebanon," he said.

Arafat said he was optimistic the PLO-U.S. talks could lead to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

He said Washington had shown its respect for the PLO's views during four informal meetings with U.S. officials in Tunis.

Arafat added that Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, who toured the Middle East a week ago, had said Moscow would pass the PLO's posi-

tions to Israel.

On Thursday, Arafat told Dubai Television that Shevardnadze informed him that the Soviet initiative was launched in coordination with the U.S. administration.

"It is wrong to believe that the Soviets are moving independently, and peace in the Middle East will not be achieved without the Americans," Arafat said.

In answer to a question, Arafat said he would not go to the United States unless he was officially invited.

"I have received tens of invitations from private institutions to visit the United States, but as PLO chairman, I would not do so unless I am officially invited," he said.

Israel urged the United States Friday to reconsider its dialogue with the PLO in light of Thursday's attempt to attack northern Israel, the Israeli foreign ministry said.

Israeli troops killed four members of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) in southern Lebanon Thursday. The army said the four were on their way to take hos-

tages in Israel.

Senior foreign ministry official Eitan Bentsur told the second-ranking U.S. diplomat in Tel Aviv, Arthur Hughes, that Israel viewed the latest attempted raid with grave concern.

"In our opinion, this infiltration attempt and the statement by (DFLP leader Nayef) Hawatmeh that he does not consider himself committed by PLO pledges require a reconsideration of the U.S. position towards the PLO," a foreign ministry statement said.

Thursday's attempted raid was the DFLP's second in one week and third since the United States reopened talks with the PLO. The DFLP said the attack was planned in retaliation for an Israeli air raid Tuesday.

In Damascus, Hawatmeh told Reuters his group would not be bound by Arafat's pledges or called to account by the United States.

Political analysts said Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir will use the border attacks and Likud's new dominance after sweeping wins in local elections to pursue his policy of shunning the PLO.



Prime Minister Zaid Rifai talks to the London-based Al Sharq Al Awsat daily (Petra photo)

Israelis destroy 10 Arab homes

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Israeli troops demolished or sealed 10 houses in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip of Palestinians suspected of involvement in resistance activities.

In the West Bank, the army blew up seven houses and sealed an eighth late Thursday and early Friday. The homes belonged to Palestinians suspected of killing an Arab collaborator and throwing firebombs at Israeli cars and homes, the army said.

In the Gaza Strip, the army sealed rooms in two houses belonging to Palestinians suspected of throwing firebombs at an Israeli government office and torching a bus carrying workers to Israel.

Since the beginning of the Palestinian uprising in December 1987, the army has destroyed or sealed more than 200 houses, usually before suspects were con-

victed of any wrong-doing.

The United States has condemned the practice, saying it violated the right to due process before the law.

The army Friday banned a planned Arab-Israeli peace rally, but its organisers said they would defy the order.

Amiram Goldbloom, spokesman for the Peace Now movement, told Reuters the army had banned his members from travelling to the West Bank Saturday to hold peace meetings with Palestinian residents but they would dodge army roadblocks.

"We have a number of alternative programmes prepared. They'll have to find us before they can stop us," he said.

An army spokeswoman said she had orders not to comment on the matter.

Goldbloom said Defence

(Continued on page 2)

Moscow and EC agree on Mideast

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Spanish Foreign Minister Francisco Fernandez Ordonez and Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze held talks on the Middle East Friday and agreed that the U.N. Security Council had a major role to play in finding a settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Fernandez Ordonez, current chairman of the European Community (EC) Council of Ministers, told press conference after the talks:

"The community's position is clear — to join all efforts for peace in the interests of all parties. The year 1989 could see a first step towards peace although the process will not be quick one."

Shevardnadze, who visited a number of Middle East countries last week, told the Communist Party newspaper Pravda Thursday that U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar should appoint a special envoy for the region.

Shevardnadze also said support was growing for a U.N.-sponsored international peace conference on the Middle East and that the prerequisites for a settlement existed.

"We are firmly convinced that the task of preparation of an international conference is coming to the fore now," he said.

To pave the way for such a conference, "we (the Soviet Union) plan to request Javier Perez de Cuellar to appoint an authoritative person acceptable to everyone as his special envoy for the Middle East," Shevardnadze said.

The members of the U.N. Security Council also intensify their consultations on the Middle East conflict and become a preparatory organisation for the conference, Shevardnadze told Pravda.

The Soviet Union, which has no diplomatic ties with Israel, strongly backs an international conference to solve the Arab-Israeli dispute.

During his five-state Middle Eastern tour, which ended Monday, Shevardnadze called for six to nine months of preparations for an international conference sponsored by the U.N. Security Council.

He said changed Palestinian attitudes had helped create the basis for a Middle East settlement.

"The situation in the Middle East has markedly changed of late. Real prerequisites for the start of a settlement have arisen," Shevardnadze was quoted as saying.

"This is mostly to the credit of the peaceful Palestinian uprising and to the realistic and constructive stand of the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organisation) leadership," he said.

The PLO, by affirming its readiness for a dialogue with Israel and condemning terrorism, had declared itself a serious partner at any peace talks that would be held, he said.

In another development, Egyptian sources quoted by Reuters said the Soviet Union laid the groundwork for a meeting to be held soon between the PLO and Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria.



N. Yemen approves ACC pact

AMMAN (Petra) — North Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh has endorsed a law approving the establishment of the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC). This law was endorsed earlier by the North Yemen cabinet and Consultative Council, Jordan, Iraq and North Yemen have thus completed the endorsement measures of the agreement related to the establishment of the ACC.

Iran puts death threat on all anti-Islam writers

NICOSIA (Agencies) — Iran Friday put the threat of death over all writers who attacked Islam, and rejected a peace gesture by Britain in the Salman Rushdie crisis.

Demonstrators calling for the British author's death for blasphemy in his novel "The Satanic Verses" marched on the British council in Dhaka, Bangladesh, and Muslim fundamentalists shouted threats outside the British embassy in the Philippines.

Rushdie telephoned a member of parliament Friday to express concern that the British government had turned against him in the furor over "The Satanic Verses," the legislator's aide said.

Rushdie called opposition lawmaker Paddy Ashdown and said he was worried about Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe's statement that many Britons as

well as Muslims find the book offensive.

The call was taken by Ashdown's Irish affairs researcher, Alison Holmes, who described the conversation to the AP.

Ashdown, who heads the centrist Social Liberal and Democrats, had written to Rushdie expressing support, Holmes said, and Rushdie called to thank him.

"He was very concerned that the whole thing had gone into a sort of phase two, based on Mr. Howe's comments last night," Holmes said.

Howe, in an interview Thursday, complained that the book compared Britain to Nazi Germany. But Howe affirmed again Friday that Britain regards freedom of speech as the paramount issue in the controversy, and that he saw no possibility of normalising relations with Iran until it

rescinded the death threat.

Police in Bombay, the birthplace of the 41-year-old writer, banned protest marches to try to stop anti-Rushdie violence. At least 20 people have been killed in protests, 12 of them in Bombay last week.

In the crowded university campus in central Tehran, Iranian President Ali Khamenei praised the death order first issued by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

"From now on, anyone who wants to write these things, or to make a film out of it, will wait for death threats from Muslims who have accepted the imam's fatwa and want to carry it out," the Iranian news agency IRNA quoted him as saying.

Khomeini has dismissed any chance of Rushdie avoiding death and hell and has said the writer, born into a Muslim family, could not be forgiven.

Drinking water in Amman — quashing the bubbles

By Dr. Raja Godeon

The writer is director of the Laboratories and Water Control Department of the Water Authority of Jordan.

THE TWO-PART article on drinking water in Amman published in the Jordan Times on Feb. 21 and 22, 1989, raised several issues concerning the quality of drinking water in Amman. Several of the points raised were in error, or misrepresented the actual conditions. In contrast to the impression produced by the article, it is the policy and practice of the Water Authority of Jordan (WAJ) to take all possible measures to protect the quality and safety of drinking water in Amman and throughout the Kingdom.

Before taking any action concerning the Zai treatment plant, the WAJ organised joint meetings between WAJ, the Royal Scientific Society (RSS), the University of Jordan, and the Ministry of Health to discuss the recommendations in the Thames Report of 1987.

The individuals quoted in the article in question attended these meetings, and agreed with the conditions established for supplying water from the Zai treatment plant to Amman. WAJ has met all the conditions established in the joint meetings.

The following measures have been, and are being, taken to ensure that water supplied to Amman from the Zai plant meet all recognised national and international standards for municipal drinking water supply.

1. Before starting operation, American experts who were involved in the design and construction of the plant were brought to Amman to ensure that all necessary and proper measures had been taken for correct and reliable operation of the plant.

2. Experts in water treatment processes who are familiar with the design of the Zai plant have been retained to train WAJ personnel in correct operation of the plant, and to ensure that the plant is operated correctly to provide max-

imum control of water quality.

3. Prior to delivering any water to Amman residents, several joint meetings were held between the WAJ, the RSS, the Ministry of Health, and the University of Jordan. All parties agreed that the procedures for start-up of the plant were adequate and proper, and that the water supplied by the Zai plant met all applicable standards for water quality.

4. Before operation of the plant began, a detailed monitoring programme was developed and instituted to detect any change in the quality of the raw water, or in the water delivered to Amman.

5. Water in the East Ghor Canal is sampled at several sites every six hours daily and analysed for several constituents. This provides an early warning of any possible change in the water quality. WAJ personnel also survey the length of the canal daily to observe any event, such as an unauthorised discharge or a vehicle accident, which might influence water quality.

6. Water in the treatment plant is monitored continuously to ensure that it meets all relevant requirements for water quality and plant operation.

7. More than 20 locations in Amman are monitored daily, and analysed for relevant water quality parameters to ensure that water delivered to consumers in Amman is safe and of the highest quality.

The Jordan Times article presents a number of unsubstantiated assertions about the water quality in Amman. The individuals quoted in the article misrepresent the capabilities of the Zai plant and the threats to water quality in the East Ghor Canal by implying that water from King Talal Dam is present in the East Ghor Canal. This is presently not the case. All former inputs to the canal from King Talal Dam have been closed. There is now no water from King Talal Dam entering the East Ghor Canal.

Upon completion of the measures to protect the water supply in the East Ghor Canal, individuals from RSS, the Uni-

versity of Jordan, and the Ministry of Health, including those individuals quoted in the Jordan Times articles, toured the canal and the Zai plant. All were aware of the conditions in the canal and at the treatment plant, and all agreed that the measures taken were sufficient to protect the quality of water delivered to Amman.

The following concerns, quoting apparently not very well-informed RSS and university experts, were raised in the article:

1. The Zai treatment plant is not capable of treating the water in the East Ghor Canal.

2. The water coming to Amman from the East Ghor Canal is contaminated with trihalomethanes (THM), which pose an imminent risk of cancer to water consumers.

3. Polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH — called PAC in the Jordan Times article) pose a significant risk to water consumers in Amman, because they are carcinogenic and accumulate in body fat.

4. Polychlorinated biphenyls (Continued on page 4)

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Coup threat grows in Sudan with no break in political crisis

KHARTOUM (R) — The threat of a military coup by junior officers in Sudan is steadily increasing with no break in sight in the political crisis between the army and government, Arab and Western diplomats said Friday.

"The longer it goes on the more dangerous it will get," said a senior diplomat. "Army chiefs say younger officers are under control, but this will lessen as time goes on. Some officers may be waiting in the wings."

Sudan's generals, frustrated by lack of arms to fight southern rebels and fed up with bickering among 32 political parties, put the army on nationwide alert Tuesday after Prime Minister Sadeq Al Mahdi failed to meet their demands for reform.

The 53-year-old prime minister has threatened to resign unless the military gives him a free hand to form a new, broad-based government.

Sudan's joint presidency, a largely ceremonial five-man Supreme Council, was discussing a seven-point programme proposed by council member Mirghani Al Nassei, the official news agency SUNA reported Friday.

The vaguely-worded program-



Sadeq Al Mahdi

me included the preservation of democracy, increased support for the army, peace in the south and a struggle for economic recovery, according to the SUNA report.

Troops have thrown sandbag defences around military centres in Khartoum, including the headquarters of the army and engineering corps. They were also stopping and searching cars on the outskirts of the capital, residents reported Thursday.

With 60,000 soldiers bogged in the five-year-old southern war, the generals told Mahdi Feb. 20 he must either find more funds

for the army or negotiate peace. Diplomats, however, do not see the coup threat as coming from top commanders, who have pledged to respect a democratic constitution established in 1986 after 16 years of dictatorship under Jaafar Numeiri.

"Not the generals, I don't think," said a Western diplomat. "Only the middle-ranking and junior officers may be adventurous enough to take charge of this mess."

Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi, who backs the Khartoum government in the southern war, said Thursday the crisis was not due to incompetence and a coup would not solve Sudan's problems.

In a speech in Tripoli reported by the Libyan news agency JANA, Qadhafi urged Sudan to adopt "people's authority" on the Libyan model.

"The solution lies in changing to the government of the masses method and the people's own authority," Qadhafi said.

"All revolutionary forces and revolutionary committees in Sudan should encourage the masses to establish peacefully people's authority."



Afghans cutting up a wrecked Soviet tank to sell as scrap metal in Pakistan

Rebels say Afghan plot uncovered

ISLAMABAD (R) — A planned coup against Afghan President Najibullah was uncovered by the government just before the last Soviet troops left the country last month, according to a prominent rebel commander.

A rebel Mujahideen news organisation Friday quoted commander Abdul Haq as saying 580 people were involved on the alleged plot uncovered Feb. 13, two days before the end of the Soviet withdrawal.

Haq was also quoted as saying Moscow had left behind 10,000 Persian-speaking troops to help Najibullah's government in the continuing war against the Mu-

jahideen.

There was no independent confirmation of either charge.

Haq is one of the leading commanders of Mujahideen guerrillas trying to lay siege to Kabul, the Afghan capital.

He has said the guerrillas do not plan to take the city by outright assault in which civilians might be killed in large numbers, but with the help of sympathisers in the capital who would revolt when ordered.

The Afghan Media Resource Centre (AMRC) quoted Haq as saying that among the alleged coup plotters was Vice-President Hamid Mohtat.

It said the plot was uncovered by a man only identified as Gulad, second deputy to President Najibullah, whose government is fighting the rebels alone following the Soviet departure.

Haq alleged that Moscow had left behind 10,000 Persian-speaking soldiers to beef up the government's resistance, AMRC said.

Haq said the Soviet soldiers came from areas bordering Afghanistan. A Persian dialect is one of the two main languages of the country.

He said they wore the uniforms of Afghan Palace guards and mostly lived in East European embassies.

Lebanese army boosts strength in south

ZAHRANI, Lebanon (Agencies) — Some 500 soldiers of the Lebanese army, backed by 10 aging Soviet-designed tanks, deployed Friday around the Zaharani oil refinery, beefing up a brigade-strength force stationed in South Lebanon.

A military spokesman, speaking on condition of anonymity, said some soldiers of the mechanised battalion, backed by T-54 tanks, were to move later in the day to the inland town of Zaghdra, where the Lebanese army has its most forward positions in South Lebanon.

Zaghdra is 20 kilometres north of Israel's self-designated "security zone" in South Lebanon.

Two Israeli jet fighters crisscrossed the skies on reconnaissance missions as the troops rolled south of Zaharani, 60 kilometres south of Beirut.

The jets broke the sound barrier and drew anti-aircraft fire from Palestinian and Lebanese gunners in South Lebanon. No hits were recorded.

Major-General Sami Khatib, the U.S.-trained commander of Muslim units in the divided army, said in a recent interview he would send reinforcements to South Lebanon to fight Israel and cooperate with U.N. peacekeeping troops to enforce U.N. Security Council Resolution 425.

That resolution, passed after Israeli forces invaded South Lebanon in 1978, calls for the unconditional withdrawal of Israeli forces and the deployment of the 5,800-strong United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

(UNIFIL) along the border.

UNIFIL, whose area of operations overlaps the Israeli "security zone," has still not been able to move up to the border because the Israelis refuse to pull back.

Political sources said the reinforcements reflected the desire of Lebanon's civilian government to establish its authority in the south as it vies for power with a military administration.

The region is a staging ground for resistance attacks against Israel. It is controlled by Lebanese militias, UNIFIL, the Israeli army and the South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia.

Militiamen killed about 140 people in battles for supremacy in Beirut and the south in January before a Damascus peace pact took hold.

An army statement said the government of Salim Al Hoss approved the deployment to "back regular army troops stationed there is repulsing the continued Israeli aggression on Lebanese territory and help restore normal life."

The Hoss government is struggling for authority with a military cabinet appointed by President Amin Gemayel before ending his term last September without a successor.

General Michel Aoun, who heads the military government, has called for authorities to take control in Lebanon since his troops fought with militiamen last month.

He has an estimated 15,000 soldiers in Lebanon's Christian enclave.

Israelis destroy 10 homes

(Continued from page 1)

Minister Yitzhak Rabin had criticised the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) for allegedly stopping Arabs in the occupied territories from taking a moderate stance and entering a dialogue with Israelis.

"Now Rabin is doing just what he accuses the PLO of," Gold-bloom said.

Troops in the West Bank town of Ramallah shot and wounded a Palestinian during anti-Israeli clashes there, and injured one in Tulkarem and three in Hebron, hospitals reported.

Authorities ordered the Arabic-language Al Raya newspaper closed indefinitely saying it was supported by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), Palestinian sources said.

In the Gaza Strip, businessman Hashem Attar Al Shawa sent a telegram to "military government" head Ariyeh Shiffman saying Israeli tax and administra-

tive measures were driving the strip's traders to bankruptcy.

Shawa, head of the Gaza Citrus Growers Union, said as long as Israel occupied the strip with its 650,000 mainly refugee Arab residents: "You have the responsibility to take care of Gaza."

The Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas called Friday for a general strike in the occupied territories and a week-long confrontation with Israel to mark the feast of Isra and Mi'raj.

In a statement sent to Reuters in Cyprus, the fundamentalist organisation called for seven days of struggle against the occupation beginning Friday.

Hamas also called for a general strike Thursday, March 9, which marks the beginning of the 16th month of the uprising.

"The land of Palestine was honoured by this miracle (Isra and Mi'raj) so the holiness of Palestine is related to that of Mecca," the statement said.

Islamic movement may contest Knesset elections

By Howard Goller
Reuter

TEL AVIV — The spiritual leader of the Islamic movement in Israel, buoyed by strong Arab support in local voting, said he would contest Knesset elections.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, whose hardline Likud party scored a landslide victory among Jews in Tuesday's municipal elections, said Wednesday the rise of the Islamic movement demonstrated a worrying cycle of extremism.

But the movement's spiritual leader, Sheikh Abdullah Nimr Darwish denied this, citing his groups acceptance of Israel

and saying it would work for change within the law.

"We are citizens of the state of Israel. That means we recognise the state of Israel publicly and out loud," he told Israel Radio.

Speaking in Hebrew, he said the movement would consider running in elections for the Knesset (parliament) due in 1992.

"It's early yet to talk of running for the Knesset. But I want to say we will consider it and if there is a place for us to run, we will run," he said, adding the expression "B'ezrat Hashem," Hebrew for "With God's Help."

Muslims make up 615,000 of Israel's 4.4 million people.

The Islamic movement, the Israeli arm of the Muslim Brotherhood, emerged as a new political force with Tuesday's voting. It won 12 out of 15 seats on the council of Umm Al Fahm, Israel's second largest Arab town.

It took six of 19 seats in Nazareth, the largest Arab town where half the population is Christian.

The Communist Party was the big loser in Arab sector polls, and a party leader, Salem Joubran, blamed the spread of Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East since the 1979 Iranian revolution.

But Hussein Abu Hussein, a secular Umm Al Fahm lawyer, said many residents supported

the Muslim list in hopes of better public services after decades of communist rule, and not out of fundamentalist convictions.

The Islamic Resistance Movement, the Muslim Brotherhood's wing in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, is active in the 14-month-old Palestinian uprising and has vowed to establish an Islamic state in place of Israel.

Asked about the Islamic movement's past opposition to Israel, Sheikh Abdullah said: "Every man and every politician in the Middle East — or ask any politician in the state of Israel about his political past — had some sort of struggle, did he not?"

Rifai: No peace except through int'l conference

(Continued from page 1)

oners included administrative detainees, Rifai said there were no political prisoners in Jordan "because we do not sentence individuals to imprisonment just because of their party affiliation or affiliation to illegal organisations despite the fact that such organisations are violating the law."

Rifai said the Royal Decree covered those who were sentenced after being convicted of criminal acts which could be committed against a political background.

Rifai said the number of those serving administrative detention terms did not exceed 35 and that they were all released.

On Jordan's efforts to achieve rapprochement between Cairo and Damascus and Baghdad, Rifai said that the major preoccupation of King Hussein was to remove inter-Arab differences and to strengthen Arab solidarity.

"It is for this reason that King Hussein has been exerting untiring efforts to clear the Arab atmosphere," he said.

Rifai pointed out that a special committee entrusted with drawing up the Jordanian Election Law was about to complete its work and submit its proposals and recommendations to amend the election law, excluding the West Bank, which has become part of the land of the state of Palestine, which Jordan has recognised.

Rifai said the Jordanian eco-

nomics was an intact economy "which has been achieving good growth rates, when compared with other countries in the region or even in the world."

"The problem which we have faced and are still suffering from is the shortage of hard currency which we need to pay for servicing debts," he said.

Rifai noted that Jordan's debts have accumulated because it did not receive the full amounts pledged by Arab countries at the Baghdad summit in 1978. The only Arab country which has honoured its commitment is Saudi Arabia while other countries either honoured part of their commitments or did not pay regularly throughout the last 10 years, he said.

"The government debts throughout this period were based on the assumption that the expected Arab assistance was enough to settle our debts and interests. But when this assistance did not arrive, we were forced to settle our debts from our reserves in order to maintain our credibility in the world. This situation forced us to reconsider our financial and economic situation, given the fact that we reached a situation whereby we could not continue to settle our debts from our own resources."

"Therefore restructured our entire economy and curbed our public spending and rationalised the use of foreign currency, adopted some difficult measures, which were hard both to the

country and the citizens."

The economic measures adopted by Jordan, Rifai said, are not temporary but reflect a new trend aimed at achieving self-reliance, overcoming the difficult situation and avoiding any similar crises in the future.

Rifai said the new policy would continue for several years.

Rifai stressed that the problem does not lie in Jordan's debts to governments but in its commercial and bank debts, which need an international coverage through the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Jordan has not applied for any IMF assistance, Rifai said. However, he added, two teams from the World Bank and IMF visit the Kingdom every year and "we discuss with them the financial, economic and monetary situations."

"The World Bank team was here two weeks ago, and the IMF team will be arriving in few days. Following our talks with the visiting IMF team, we will request the IMF to assist us to reschedule our debts."

Rifai outlined Jordan's role in the Middle East peace process, saying that it supports the PLO in whatever it decides and its endeavour to achieve its objectives.

"We are part of the Arab World and part of the region, so our role in any peace process will be supportive of the PLO. However, we also have a role to play as one of the frontline states," Rifai added.

Rifai said the PLO had adopted an internationally acceptable position and succeeded in winning U.S. approval to start a dialogue with it after announcing its well-known resolutions adopted in Algiers by the Palestine National Council (PNC) and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's positions as voiced before the United Nations General Assembly.

Rifai pointed out that the U.S. and the Soviet Union, in addition to the other member states of the U.N. Security Council, have contributed to solving the problems of Afghanistan, Kampuchea and Angola and to the ceasefire between Iran and Iraq.

Rifai said Middle East peace would be forthcoming when these states reach an agreement among themselves on a solution to the Arab-Israeli question.

The march for peace in the Middle East cannot be initiated except through an international conference, which cannot be convened until these states reach an agreement," he said.

The prime minister said the United States should play a major role in developing and changing the Israeli position to accept peaceful initiatives.

Rifai voiced hope that international pressures and efforts made by Arab countries and Jordan, in addition to the PLO's dialogue with the U.S. could lead to crystallising an American position capable of initiating the peace process.

Anti-Zionist Jews aid uprising victims

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Members of an anti-Zionist, ultra-orthodox Jewish sect have contributed \$12,000 to aid Palestinians wounded or imprisoned during the uprising, saying the money was a way of "asking forgiveness."

Wearing traditional black hats and long black coats, members of the Neturei Karta movement also handed out Thursday bags of sweets wrapped in heart-foolproof paper and tied with ribbons to uprising victims at three Palestinian hospitals.

The sweets were accompanied by a note in Arabic: "Wishing a complete recovery and asking their forgiveness," said Rabbi Moshe Hirsch, a leader of the small Jewish sect that opposes the founding of the state of Israel.

Hirsch said the group was "trying to help our fellow Palestinians realise that their miserable plight does not stem from the Jewish people but rather from a power clique in Israel who exploits Jewish values."

"The Zionists have led the world to believe that all Jews act like savages — by their attempt to suppress the intifada through inhumane behaviour," said Hirsch.

The New York-born Hirsch said Neturei Karta collected contributions from ultra-orthodox Jews living in Jerusalem's Mea Shearim neighbourhood. The group's several thousand members in Israel oppose the state, contending that a Jewish state should not be formed before the coming of the Messiah.

The \$12,000-contribution was to be distributed to three Palestinian hospitals in the West Bank and from Jerusalem, as well as to the Red Crescent Society.

Society head Dr. Salim Matuk accepted a \$3,000 check to be distributed to Palestinians detained in Israeli prisons since the start of the uprising.

"We highly esteem this contribution, it has come in a way that will give us spirit to continue our humanitarian work," Matuk said.

Mousavi says he will not run for presidency

NICOSIA (R) — Iranian Prime Minister Mir-Hussein Mousavi says he will not stand as a candidate in forthcoming presidential elections, the Iranian news agency IRNA reported Friday.

IRNA, received in Nicosia, said Mousavi made clear he was not a candidate in a two hour interview published in full by the evening Farsi newspaper Ettelaat Thursday.

"Premier Mousavi ruled out his candidacy in the presidential polls," IRNA said.

Commenting on the coming elections, Mousavi said: "We elect a president without foreign interference which is an extraordinary phenomenon in the Third World."

He said the executive system ensures that "no political contradictions" can influence what he

called the normal trend.

"Naturally some changes may occur in the country's management and naturally a new government may come and some others would go," he added.

He described the presidential elections as "an exciting and holy task" for Iran.

Iran's Interior Minister Ali Akbar Mohtashemi said recently that the presidential elections would be held between July 23 and Aug. 22.

President Ali Khamenei's second four year term runs out in October. He is barred by law from seeking a third term.

Speaker of Parliament Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani has already declared his candidacy. President Khamenei has said Rafsanjani is the best man for the job.

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DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION	
Tel: 77111-19	
PROGRAMME ONE	
15:30	Koran
15:40	Programme review
15:45	Children programme
17:00	Educational programme
17:30	The Friends
18:00	News summary
18:05	Message from Iraq
18:15	A play by Shakespeare
19:00	Local programme
19:40	Programme review
20:00	News in Arabic
20:30	Programme on hot springs in Jordan
21:00	Arabic series
21:45	Local programme
22:00	Arabic play
23:00	News in Arabic
23:10	Play continued
PROGRAMME TWO	
18:00	Coucou: A la Redecouverte du Monde
19:00	News in French
19:15	La Vie En France
19:30	News in Hebrew
19:45	Natural Phenomena
20:00	Special programme: Hot Springs in Jordan
21:00	Alfred Hitchcock
21:30	Saturday Variety Show
22:00	News in English
22:30	Feature film: "Molly and Lawrence John"

PRAYER TIMES	
04:48	Fajr
05:56	(Sunrise) Dhuhr
11:47	Dhuhr
15:45	'Asr
17:38	Maghreb
18:55	'Isha
CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church	Swedish, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel.	632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590.	
Church of the Annunciation Tel.	637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757	
Terrasanta Church Tel. 622366	
Church of the Annunciation Tel.	623541
Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel.	626343
Armenian Catholic Church Tel.	771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel.	775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.	
Armenian International Church Tel.	658326
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel.	811295
Bahaiyy Congregation Tel. 822605.	
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 815817, 821264	
WEATHER	
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.	
There will be a drop in temperature with clouds appearing at different altitudes. Winds will be northerly to moderate. In Amman, it will be dusky. Winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.	
Amman	Min./max. temp. 4/14
Aqaba	11/22
Deserts	3/18
Jordan Valley	10/20
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 18, Aqaba 25. Humidity reading: Amman 57 per cent, Aqaba 41 per cent.	
USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS	
NIGHT DUTY	
AMMAN:	
Dr. Sami Khouri	661373
Dr. Khalid M'addi	743500
Dr. Mohammad Al Abbadi	778539
Dr. Ahmad Al Dagh	676034
First pharmacy	661912
Farrows pharmacy	783336
Al Asena pharmacy	637035
Natroukhi pharmacy	626372
Al Salam pharmacy	636730
Yacoub pharmacy	649445
Samakani pharmacy	637660
IRBID:	
Dr. Mu'In Baybeh	(-)
Al Shanna pharmacy	(985238)
ZAQQA:	
Dr. Abdul Karim Al Khashashah	(-)
Khalifeh pharmacy	985417
EMERGENCIES	
Civil Defence Department	661111
Civil Defence Immediate	630341
Rescue	199
Civil Defence Emergency	192, 631111, 637777
Fire Brigade	62009093
Blood Bank	775121
Highway Police	843402
Traffic Police	65639091
Public Security Department	656000/685111
Hotel Complaints	605800
Price Complaints	661176
Water and Sewerage	(-)
Complaints	897487
Amman Municipality	(-)

HOSPITALS	
AMMAN:	
Hussein Medical Centre	81381332
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn.	6442816
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn.	6442412
Abdali Maternity	642362
Mathas, J. Amman	636140
Palestine, Shamsani	6641714
Shamsani Hospital	669131
University Hospital	845845
Al-Musader Hospital	6672279
The Islamic, Abdali	66612737
Al-Abdi, Abdali	6641646
Italian, Al-Muhajir	771015
Al-Bashir, J. Ashraf	7751126
Army, Marja	891611/5
Queen Alia Hospital	60224030

NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

KING CONGRATULATES MOROCCO: His Majesty King Hussein Thursday sent a cable of congratulations to Morocco's King Hassan on the anniversary of his accession to throne. In his cable the King wished King Hassan good health and the Moroccan people further progress and prosperity. (Petra)

LIQUOR STORES TO CLOSE ON SUNDAY: All liquor stores, bars and nightclubs in Amman and its suburbs will be closed as of Saturday evening and until Monday morning according to instructions issued by Amman Governor Mohammad Ali Al Amin. The order was issued to coincide with the Kingdom's celebration of the Israa Wal Miraj feast, which falls Sunday, when religious ceremonies are normally held in mosques to mark the occasion. Sunday has been announced a public holiday during which all government departments and public institutions will remain closed on the occasion. (Petra)

HAWARI RECEIVES CHINESE AIDE: Ministry of Public Works and Housing Secretary General Khalaf Al Hawari Thursday discussed with the Chinese deputy minister of mining spheres of mutual cooperation in the field of construction. They also discussed the Al Hussein Sports City project which a Chinese company is carrying out at the cost of JD 7.5 million, in accordance with a cooperation agreement signed between the two countries. (Petra)

JABR HOLDS TALKS WITH ENVOYS: Agriculture Minister Youssef Hamdan Al Jabr Thursday discussed with the Australian ambassador in Amman spheres of cooperation in the field of agriculture. He also received the Chinese ambassador to Jordan at the conclusion of his tour of duty. (Petra)

ART EXHIBITION: A four-day exhibition has been opened at the Petra Bank Gallery by Plastic Artist Ahmad Subeih. The exhibition includes 34 pieces of art depicting Jordan's rural houses and old market places, in addition to life style and traditions. (Petra)

JBA elects president

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordan Bar Association (JBA) Thursday elected Walid Abdul Hadi as its president, while the names of the members did not appear until late Friday night. Walid Abdul Hadi won 440 votes in the second round of elections which was held Thursday evening after the failure of any of the other contestants to obtain 51 per cent of the total votes. The ex-president of JBA Subhaiman Al Hadidi won 323 votes while Zuhair Abu Al Ragheb, another contestant for the presidency, won 297 votes only. (J.T.)

RJ to begin flights to Jakarta in April

AMMAN (Petra, J.T.) — Royal Jordanian (RJ), the national airline, will start operating flights to Jakarta, Indonesia, towards the end of April, an RJ statement released here said Friday.

The statement said that flights will start at the rate of two a week, increasing gradually to four weekly flights by 1990, in accordance with an agreement concluded with Indonesia in January 1989.

The agreement was reached during a tour of three Far Eastern nations by Civil Aviation Authority Director General Mahmoud

Balqaz at the head of a delegation.

By the end of April 1989, Jakarta will be the fourth station after Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore for RJ planes in the national airline's Far East network, the statement noted.

It said that RJ has plans to operate flights to Peking, Tokyo, Sydney and Manila as a next step.

Manila was one of the Far Eastern capitals visited by Balqaz during his January trip where he discussed the prospects of reaching an air transport agreement.

Princess Rahmeh centre to serve as regional HQ

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Princess Rahmeh Social Development Centre at Allan, near Salt, has been chosen to serve as a regional headquarters for a United Nations centre for promoting agrarian reform and rural development in countries of the Near East region.

The decision was taken at the end of a three-day meeting by the U.N. centre's board members, who discussed matters related to the functions, activities, programmes, and the budget of the centre, as well as relations and cooperation with other world organisations.

Delegates representing Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Tunisia, and Pakistan discussed these matters and said in a final statement that the new centre at Allan should embark on immediate operations which also include training courses for personnel from the participating countries.

The statement noted that Jordan will bear the initial cost of establishing the centre by providing financial requirements and furniture, as well as part of the staff.

The centre will maintain close cooperation with the Arab League and its affiliated organisations, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), to which this centre is affiliated, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the World Health Organisation (WHO), the statement pointed out.

Dr. Shabbib Abu Jabr from Jordan has been appointed director of the centre which, according to FAO officials, will help promote the exchange of expertise in rural development and agrarian reform in countries of the Near East region.

Speeches at the opening session of the three-day meeting underline the importance of the project which aims at developing rural regions and stemming the movement of citizens from rural to urban regions.

In the past three days the delegates discussed and endorsed statutes regarding the centre's activities, administrative structure and function, and other operations.

The meeting was sponsored jointly by FAO and Ministry of Social Development.

WHAT'S GOING ON

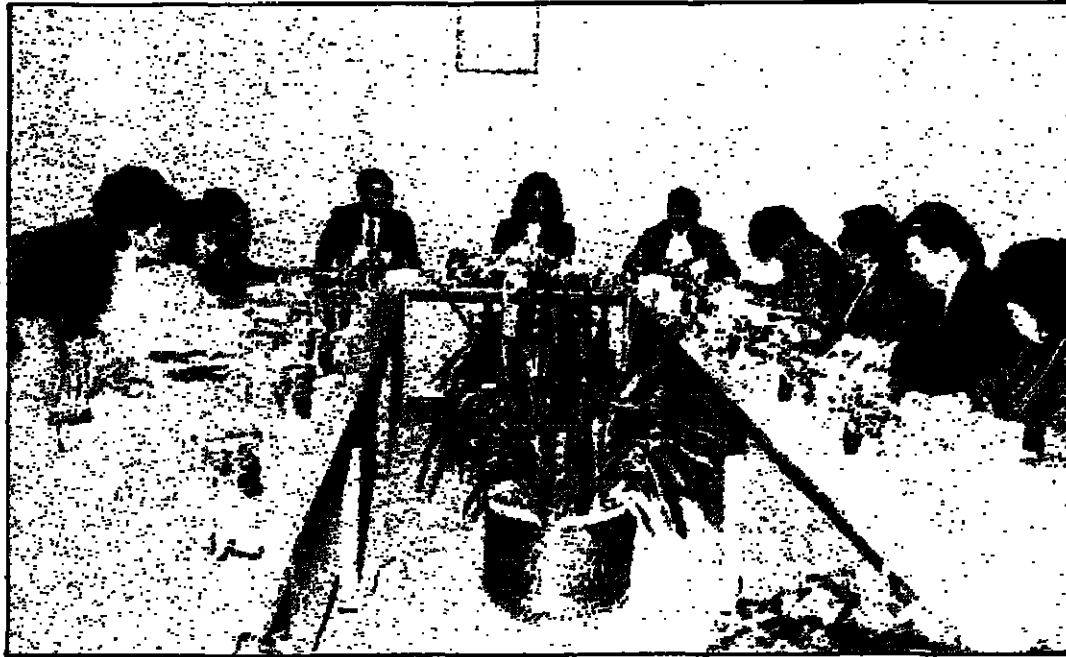
The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ The Arab Contemporary Artists exhibition at Al Wasti Gallery.
- ★ An exhibition entitled "The Icebreaker" which includes showing a film about the activities of a Swedish icebreaker and the environment surrounding it, a photo exhibition and a radio programme at the French Cultural Centre.
- ★ An art exhibition by Mohammed Bolls and Munira Al Tunisiyya at Al Qadisiyya College.
- ★ The Yemeni national heritage exhibition which includes Yemeni costumes, handicrafts, photos and books at the Yarmouk University.
- ★ An exhibition of photographs and paintings showing the main European cities in three historical eras, at the University of Jordan.
- ★ An exhibition of paintings for children by Titiana Rifai and Karoline Ayoub at Haya Arts Centre.
- ★ A plastic art exhibition by Rula Shuqairi at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ A plastic art exhibition by Noelle Shawa at Alia Art Gallery.
- ★ An art exhibition by Ahmed Subeih at the Petra Bank Gallery.
- ★ A graphic art exhibition displaying works by German artists Liebermann, Stevogt and Coriath at the Jordan National Gallery.
- ★ Amman International Book Exhibition which includes various scientific, literary, religious and children's books at the International Motor Centre.

FILM

- ★ An Italian film entitled "Le Olimpiadi Della Giungla" at Haya Arts Centre — 7:30 p.m.



Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Thursday chairs the board of directors meeting of the newly formed Arab Women's Scientific Council in Amman (Petra photo)

Princess Basma urges participation in AWSC to help develop women's status

AMMAN (Petra) — A two-day meeting for the Arab Women's Scientific Council's (AWSC) Board of Directors, chaired by Her Royal Highness Princess Basma, concluded here Friday and adopted a number of decisions designed to improve the condition of poor rural and urban women through the introduction of projects and programmes that benefit them.

The board decided to introduce comprehensive pan-Arab projects, programmes, and activities, that ensure the integration of the economic, social, political and cultural dimensions.

Participants also decided that the council coordinate with similar Arab organisations and institutions and to take part in Arab and international conferences.

The board elected Secretary General of the Economic and

Social Commission of Western Asia (ESCWA) Tayseer Abdul Jabr as vice president of the council.

The board met in Amman Thursday under the chairmanship of Her Royal Highness Princess Basma to review the council's programmes and means of achieving its objectives.

The AWSC, which was formed last October, aims to advocate women's role in community development and to enhance female leadership in dealing with national issues.

Addressing the opening session of the two-day meeting, Princess Basma called for widening the base of the council by inviting qualified men and women from the Arab World to join as members and contribute to the development of women's status.

"People concerned with the

promotion of Arab women's participation in social and cultural affairs should be allowed to have a share in the council's activities, which aim to highlight and promote women's role in all development domains," Princess Basma said.

The princess paid tribute to the Arab women who had contributed to social development in the past years and said the council's board "ought to exert serious efforts to increase Arab women's participation in such endeavours."

Dr. Tayseer Abdul Jabr, who is a member of the council's board, said the meeting was called to take the council from the stage of establishment to that of action.

Princess Basma was elected unanimously as president of the council at the October meeting which was attended by 18 delegates from six Arab countries.

Queen Alia foundation team begins testing people with hearing problems

KARAK (Petra) — A team of specialists from the Queen Alia Foundation for Hearing and Speech (QAFHS) has embarked on a large scale programme of examining people with hearing problems and providing them with hearing aids.

The team started its campaign at the Mu'ta special education centre near Karak where its members examined a number of children and provided them with hearing aids free of charge.

A foundation spokesman said that the hearing aids were pre-

sented as a gift from the General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS).

A spokesman for the team said that the campaign will essentially cover remote regions where there is no sufficient and proper care for children with hearing problems.

Cases which are too difficult to deal with during the teams' tours, he said, will be referred to the foundation's hearing and speech centre in Amman.

The spokesman called on citizens especially students to be-

nefit from these free of charge services and appealed to parents and doctors to refer children with hearing problems to specialists at an early stage so that better and faster cure can be ensured.

The teams will carry out the campaign in the remote regions with the help of a mobile clinic fully equipped with instruments and qualified staff, the spokesman said.

The campaign, he added, is being carried out in cooperation with GUVS.

Cairo seminar to discuss ways of providing people with potable water

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan and Egypt will hold a joint seminar in Cairo next month on ways of providing potable water for the public and means of disposing of sewage and other waste.

A statement here Friday said that experts in these matters, who will take part in the discussions, will review a number of working papers which cover such issues as providing protection to water resources from pollutants.

The papers also cover the ques-

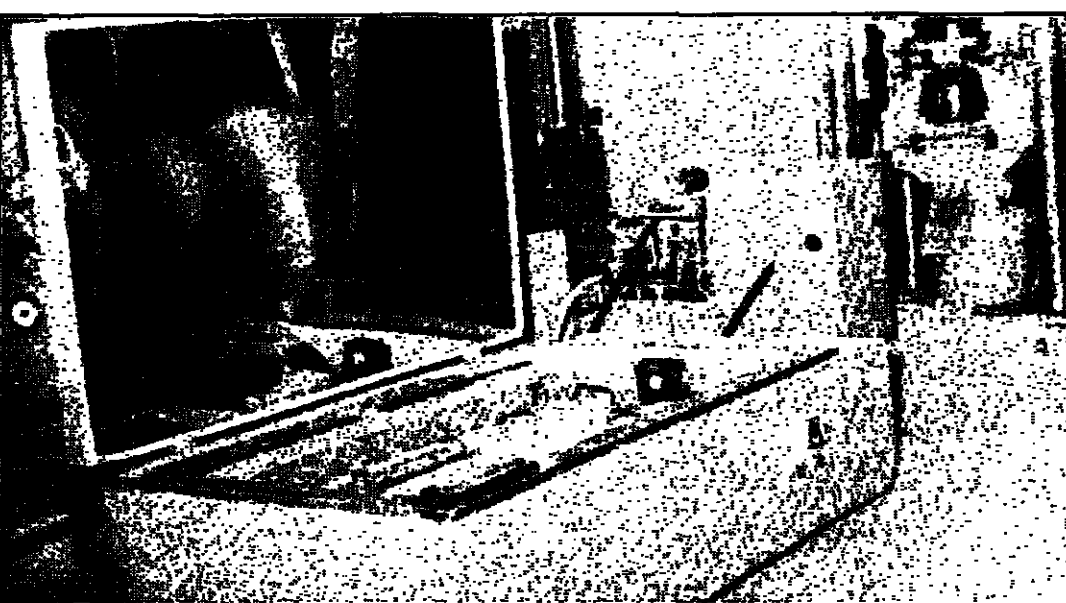
tion of industrial waste, which is the major source of water pollution, and the treatment of waste and waste water, as well as sound measures to follow in supplying drinking water to population centres.

The seminar in Cairo comes close on the heels of a disclosure here last month by Swedish experts conducting study on pollution sources in Jordan.

The experts, invited by the government to carry out this task, revealed that one of the most

polluted areas in the country was the Zarga River Basin as a result of factory waste and municipal waste water. The pollutants they said can have serious effects on health.

The study, on the environment in general and water resources in particular, is being conducted by the Department of Environment at the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment in cooperation with the Swedish team.



The new special-purpose refrigerator was recently added to the batteries testing laboratory at the Royal Scientific Society.

Battery refrigerator made at RSS

AMMAN (J.T.) — A new piece of equipment has been recently added to the Batteries Testing Laboratory of the Mechanical Engineering Department at the Royal Scientific Society, RSS. It is a special-purpose refrigerator designed and manufactured by the RSS mechanical workshop.

This new refrigerator will be used in conducting high rate discharge and charge acceptance tests of lead-acid batteries at zero degrees centigrade.

This new device was thought of in light of the following factors:

The accumulation of work at the Batteries Testing Laboratory due to the insufficient capacity of the existing refrigeration unit.

The continuous need for extra workers to transport batteries to the existing refrigerator, which is far away from the laboratory.

The high operating cost of the existing device (17.8 Kw/hr).

In light of these factors, Osama Melhem of the RSS Mechanical Engineering Department suggested a new special design of a refrigerator suitable for testing lead-acid batteries, and at the same time to be able to save 98 per cent of the power consumed by the existing one.

The scientific, social, practical, and economic feasibility of the new device has been verified.

Melhem prepared the mechanical drawings, thermodynamic calculations, electrical control circuit, and engineering design of the refrigeration cycle.

In March 1988, analysis was carried out to test the components of batteries so as to determine the average weights of the individual components involved in thermodynamic calculations.

The capacity of the new device was designed to match the job specifications and this resulted in a distinguished and useful device — RSS News.

Masri: Kingdom's illiteracy rate stands at 15%

Jordan's illiteracy rate expected to reach 10 per cent by year 2000

By Rania Atalla
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan's illiteracy rate, currently standing at 15 per cent, is expected to reach 10 per cent by the year 2000 and may even hit the five to seven per cent mark by the turn of the century, once additional illiteracy eradication programmes are carried out in cooperation with Arab and international organisations, according to Ministry of Education Undersecretary Munther Al Masri.

Speaking at a press conference Thursday, Masri said that apart from its traditional on-going literacy projects, the Ministry of Education plans to carry out "sectoral literacy projects" starting 1990, the international literacy year.

Among the ministry's first four-year-long "sectoral projects" is the Jordan Valley project, expected to benefit 12,000 citizens. The ministry intends to carry out similar projects in the rural areas and the Badia.

Masri noted that the Kingdom had achieved its current 15 per cent illiteracy rate (for those between 15 and 45 years of age) by providing the first ten years of schooling free of charge and by arranging literacy programmes for those who had no chance to receive formal schooling — a group that constitutes 22 per cent of Jordanians above 16 years of age.

According to the ministry figures, more than 10,000 individuals, 8,927 of whom are females, were registered for literacy programmes during the 1988-89 scholastic year. Over the past 20 years, more than 150,000 Jordanians had joined illiteracy eradication classes in the country.

Despite the Kingdom's "low" illiteracy rate, the ministry has assigned special importance to its literacy programmes, establishing

men, Masri notes. UNESCO figures also cite a 50 per cent the Arab World's average illiteracy rate for men compared to 70 per cent for women. The U.N. estimates that in 1985 there were 889 million illiterate adults in the world — 27.7 per cent of all those over 15 years of age. Nearly 98 per cent of those live in developing countries, with Asia alone having 666 million illiterates. The majority of the world illiterates live in rural areas.

The General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS) director, Dr. Abdullah Al Khatib, who also addressed Thursday's conference, said that without the support of voluntary organisations, the ministry's objective of eradicating illiteracy in the Kingdom would be difficult to achieve.

GUVS runs 245 literacy centres in the West Bank benefiting approximately 6,000 individuals, according to Khatib who estimated the illiteracy rate in West Bank at "no more than 15 per cent" for the 15-45 age group.

Khatib announced that GUVS will give out three monetary prizes worth JD 5,000 each for any individual or group of people who achieve remarkable goals for the 1990 international literacy year in Jordan.

Dr. Abdul Wahab Youssef of the UNESCO regional office in Amman said the 1990 illiteracy eradication programme for the Arab World will be launched from Jordan since the Kingdom's programme can be taken as a model for other Arab countries, on both the official and popular levels.

He expressed UNESCO's willingness for cooperation with the Kingdom, the illiteracy situation of which he described as "encouraging."

Majali asked to join U.N. University board

AMMAN (J.T.) — Dr. Abdul Salam Al Majali, president of the University of Jordan, has received an invitation from United Nations Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Director-General Federico Mayor to join the board of trustees of the United Nations' University for the next six years starting May 3, 1989.

Majali has been a member of this university's board from 1977-1982. Based in Tokyo, Japan, and supervised by the U.N. and UNESCO, the United Nations University was founded on the concept of an international university responsible for providing scientific freedom and benefiting from the experiences of international scientists and researchers, by coordinating with the scientific institutions and research centres all over the world.

The university provides training on higher education levels and spreads knowledge and science all over the world. Among the researches that the university conducts are human rights, communal integration, language and the social system, peace and relations among countries, economic and social change, development and environment as well as the proper use of natural resources.

The board of trustees draws the policies and the principles concerning the university's activities and discusses its programmes and budget which reaches a sum of \$100 million.

The laboratory was financed by the Italian government and set up in cooperation with the Jordan Electricity Authority (JEA), which is running the power station in the port city.

Italian Ambassador to Jordan Francesco de Curten and JEA Director Mohammad Arafah were among dignitaries attending the inauguration ceremony.

The Italian government has contributed nearly \$836,000 in the form of a grant to this project and it will be providing training.

JDA starts dental safety campaign

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordan Dentists Association (JDA) has embarked on a week-long campaign to spread awareness among schoolchildren about the need to care for their teeth on a regular basis.

The campaign, which is being launched in cooperation with the ministries of Health and Education, entails free of charge treatment of children with tooth problems by dentists from the public and private sector, and visits to schools, as well as lectures on dental safety.

The campaign is being backed by the media especially the Jordan Television which has been presenting reports featuring dentists in action.

The week-long campaign precedes Jordan's observance of the Arab Dental Health Day which falls on March 9, according to JDA President Ishaq Al Khairi.

Khairi told a press conference here that the observance of March 9 as the Arab Dental Health Day was in implementation of a decision taken by the Arab health ministers meeting.

He said the main ceremony on March 9 will be sponsored by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Thouqan Hindawi.

Rawabdeh: Municipality to develop touristic sites

AMMAN (Petra) — Greater Amman Municipality will soon reach an agreement with a financial institution to sponsor a feasibility study to develop archaeological and touristic areas in the heart of the capital, Mayor Abdul Ra'uf Al Rawabdeh announced Thursday.

He said that the development of these areas will coincide with the implementation of a project to improve and facilitate traffic movement within the capital's central regions which are inhabited by some 35,000 people.

Addressing a meeting held at the Professional Associations Complex in Amman, the mayor noted that the repair and restoration work at the archaeological areas and the improvement of the streets are part of a comprehensive plan to develop the capital.

The municipality, he said, will embark on these projects with the start of the coming month in accordance with decisions reached by the municipal council meetings recently.

Rawabdeh said the project for improving services inside the city will benefit the local inhabitants who, at present, lack basic services.

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Jordan Times

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Commendable decision

THE decision by the Council of Ministers Tuesday to subsidise basic food commodities to the tune of JD 60 million this year alone, in order to maintain their current prices, is a living proof that Prime Minister Zaid Rifai's government is determined to give the Jordanian economy a humane face come what may. Pure and simple economic considerations would have called for the elimination of food subsidies. That is exactly what "cold-blooded" economists, local and international, would have Jordan do under the existing economic circumstances. But as His Majesty King Hussein has repeatedly emphasised, the most precious asset that Jordan has is its people. Accordingly, the well being of our citizens remains Jordan's top priority as always. Moreover, the human dimension of economic policies would lend an added support to the subsidy decision. An inseparable element of His Majesty's edict is that monetary and economic policies should serve man and not the other way around. And given the economic and fiscal adjustments that Jordan and Jordanians had to undergo and experience of late as a consequence of the devaluation of the dinar, it would have caused the average Jordanian an undue hardship to have to deal with inflationary trends in basic necessities of life. Economic theorists, who enjoy high economic splendour, can of course afford to theorise on the economic wisdom of removing subsidies of even basic food staples.

The rank and file Jordanian, however, can ill afford such a luxury, as the months he or she has to feed cannot stomach such economic abstractions even though they may seem potent and real from an economist's point of view. In any case it is a big relief to know that basic food commodities such as wheat, sugar, milk, meat, poultry, barley and maize will retain their existing level of pricing for the rest of the year. It goes without saying that the average Jordanian can do without cars or air conditioning or foreign cigarettes, but he certainly cannot be expected to survive without keeping basic foodstuffs within his monetary reach. The government deserves to be commended for its brave decision to put man and his basic needs ahead of other material objectives. This is the most pragmatic way to prove that man in Jordan is most precious and that his welfare and well-being come ahead of all other considerations. What remains to be done is the articulation of policy guidelines with regard to lesser and lesser important commodities in Jordanian life. Such commodities should be taxed according to their level of importance all the way up to the level of luxury items on which there is a clear Jordanian consensus that Jordan and Jordanians can ill afford, given the economic and monetary adjustments that the country has had to undergo. And it goes without saying that once Jordan and Jordanians are once again on their feet, the need to maintain food subsidies would diminish. All signs indicate that that point in economic terms is sure to come.

JORDAN PRESS EDITORIALS

JORDANIAN newspapers Friday commented on statements by Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze in Pravda newspaper in which he said that there is a good opportunity now for the settlement of the Middle East problem. Al Ra'i Arabic daily said that the Soviet minister came out with this impression following his latest tour in the Middle East and in the light of the prevailing détente that is easing tension world-wide. The paper said that Moscow's views conform to those of the Arab countries which have been demanding the convening of an international conference to implement U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338. Indeed our region does not need new initiatives but the implementation of resolutions that are sufficient for the establishment of the aspired peace, said the paper. For peace to be achieved in our area, the paper noted, Washington and Moscow should join hands with the European Community and a peace conference should be convened as soon as possible.

A columnist in Al Ra'i daily is in the view that the Arab World should adopt a unified political stand as to the various initiatives being offered now and then for solving the Arab-Israeli conflict. Rakan Majali, who is also the newspaper editor says that this Middle East region is now being put to the test and is being bombarded with proposals and ideas for ending the conflict between the Arab and the Israelis although nothing has yet materialised. The writer says that the United States has not yet formulated a specific conception on resolving the issue and indeed the U.S. is in collusion with Israel to find an alternative to the projected international conference which is sought by the Arabs as a forum for resolving their conflict with Israel. The only feasible position is that to which Jordan has adhered since the 1967 occupation of Palestinian land and that is a demand for an international parity with the participation of all concerned parties including the PLO and the Security Council members, the writer notes. He says that we hear moderate ideas from the European Community and support for the Arab cause from Moscow, but what really counts is a strong, united and firm Arab national stand vis-a-vis the whole issue so as to confront the challenge and deal with any enemy plans to divert world attention from the real problem in our area.

Al Dustour daily commented also on Shevardnadze's statement which it describes as containing a practical proposal to end the present deadlock in the search for peace. The paper said that the Soviet minister had come to the conclusion that the Middle East region is very explosive and could flare up in a renewed conflict any moment. He said that every thing possible should be made to end the Arab-Israeli dispute through an international conference which is widely accepted, the paper noted. It said that the Arabs are for Shevardnadze's idea of convening a Security Council meeting to pave the way for such international parity and so win the United States support for a lasting and just peace.

Sawt Al Shaah daily commented on the government's decision to subsidise its supply of basic food commodities regardless of a rise in their cost on international markets. The paper said that the decision taken by the Council of Ministers and the government's determination to maintain sufficient strategic food supplies sufficing the country for at least five months give clear indication of keenness on providing stability in the country and maintaining reasonable standards of living for all citizens.

Times have changed

By Marie-Claire Mendes France

The writer, wife of the late French Prime Minister Pierre Mendes France, is chairperson of the French Committee of the International Centre for Peace in the Middle East. She gave the following at a symposium on peace in the Middle East, held Jan. 31-Feb. 2 in The Hague, Netherlands, and jointly organised by the international centre and the Free University of Amsterdam.

TIMES have changed. It took the Palestinians 40 years to recognise Israel. Let's stop talking about terrorism. With the Stockholm and Geneva declarations, Yasser Arafat has finally recognised Israel: U.N. Resolutions 181, 242 and 338 stipulate the existence of two states side by side.

If I would then have any advice for Prime Minister Shamir, I'd tell him: "Here you have a unique opportunity of going down in history as the one who brought peace to your country. Before a fragile peace is imposed from outside, now is the time to invite Yasser Arafat and to meet him — why not? — in France, a country friendly to both parties."

Today I rejoice in the liberation of Faisal Hussein by Israel. Direct negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians should start without delay, with guarantees and without double-talk, as often the same words have different meanings in East and West.

At all costs, confidence between both warring groups has to be established — that is our task as people belonging to the peace camp. There will be haggling, compromises will have to be worked out, perhaps there'll be border corrections. Yet Israel has to return the territories, and after peace has been established no fresh claims should be made.

U.N. guarantees shall have to be extended in order to avoid this. Let's continue working on both parties to bring them closer together. I take the liberty of reminding you that Pierre Mendes France sent — right after

the 1967 war — a message to General Dayan, advising him urgently to go to Cairo, as a victor, and to exchange the territories for peace. You know what came out of that... From 1976 and at their demand, Mendes France attended meetings between Israeli doves (such as Lova Eliav and General Matti Peled) and PLO representative Issam Sartawi. When in 1977 President Sadat made the gesture of going to Jerusalem, peace with Egypt followed — and incredulity gave way to joy in Israel.

In July 1982, Pierre Mendes France, Nahoum Goldmann and Philip Klutznick published the following appeal: "Peace need not be made between friends but between enemies who have struggled and suffered. Our sense of Jewish history and the moral imperatives of this moment require us to insist that the time is urgent for mutual recognition between Israel and the Palestinian people. There must be a stop to the sterile debate, whereby the Arab World challenges the existence of Israel and Jews challenge the political legitimacy of the Palestinian right for independence."

"The real issue is not whether the Palestinians are entitled to their right, but how to bring this about while ensuring Israel's security and regional stability. Ambiguous concepts such as 'autonomy' are no longer sufficient, for they too often are used to confuse rather than to clarify. Needed now is the determination

already rough parity between the two camps. NATO's fear is that Gorbachev, a master of dramatic peace initiatives who has already announced unilateral Soviet arm cuts, will impress Western public opinion with apparently generous offers which hard-nosed military negotiators would be forced to reject because they would weaken the West too much.

Still, diplomats believe the CFE talks will not share the fate of MBFR, because of Gorbachev's innovative approach to arms control and his apparent need to trim the Soviet military machine and switch resources to the domestic economy.

"We have reason for hope. We have a number of signs in that the Eastern side, the Soviet leadership, is beginning to take a more realistic approach to the fundamental problem of the confrontation of conventional forces in Europe," chief U.S. negotiator, Stephen Ledogar, said recently.

The region under negotiation is vast — stretching from the Atlantic coast to the Ural mountains

weapons to beat off a land offensive.

With public opinion in Western Europe increasingly reluctant to see a military threat from the Soviet Union under Mikhail Gorbachev, diplomats say the negotiations will prove a further test of NATO's credibility with its own citizens.

On the face of it, the Western allies hold few aces.

With little to offer except better relations, they hope to coax Moscow and its allies into scrapping huge numbers of tanks, artillery and other heavy weapons to bring them down to an equal level with NATO forces.

The CFE negotiations, which will begin in earnest on March 9 after three days of ministerial speeches, will succeed the mutual and balanced force reduction (MBFR) talks that were wound up on February 2 after 15 fruitless years. Those talks were on troop cuts in seven central European countries.

Moscow too has talked of the need for military stability. But it has challenged the West's position by asserting that there is



Shamir's new plan

to reach a political accommodation between Israeli and Palestinian nationalists.

"The war in Lebanon must stop. Israel must lift its siege of Beirut in order to facilitate negotiations with the PLO, leading to a political settlement. Mutual recognition must be vigorously pursued. And there should be negotiations with the aim of achieving co-existence between the Israeli and the Palestinian peoples based on self-determination."

This statement was made near-

ly seven years ago. The Lebanese war was a foolish enterprise. I mourn for Israel's children who died for nothing, just as today I mourn Palestinian children daily killed or wounded in the territories. Enough blood shed! As a fighter for human rights, I am ashamed that one may give orders to shoot at young children, traumatising one's own youth in the process.

Are Israel's leaders so blind as to lead their country to ruin before the eyes of its own citizens

and of the world at large?

Israel used to be a beacon of democracy and justice. Let it so once again by recognising the PLO as representative of the Palestinian people and by beginning peace talks. It is high time Israel must not forgo the opportunity presenting itself today, let the field be left open to extremists from both sides. Too many opportunities have been wasted. The chance for peace must be seized. Now — Israel and Palestine Political Report.

New arms talks will aim to cut Europe's tanks and big guns

By Richard Balmforth Reuter

BRUSSELS — East and West embark on their most ambitious arms talks next week, their sights set on cutting huge stocks of non-nuclear armaments and lifting the shadow of military confrontation from Europe.

The conventional forces in Europe (CFE) talks in Vienna will bring together for the first time all 16 North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and all seven Warsaw Pact allies for negotiations certain to last for years.

A successful outcome, NATO officials say, could rid Europe of thousands of tanks, big guns and heavy armour, and raise East-West relations to a new high.

"We'll be dealing here with the fundamental problems of East-West security that have not been touched in 40 years," a NATO official said.

Virtually since the founding of the alliance 40 years ago, the allies have argued that the Warsaw Pact's superiority in battle-field firepower would almost certainly force NATO to use nuclear

already rough parity between the two camps.

NATO's fear is that Gorbachev, a master of dramatic peace initiatives who has already announced unilateral Soviet arm cuts, will impress Western public opinion with apparently generous offers which hard-nosed military negotiators would be forced to reject because they would weaken the West too much.

Still, diplomats believe the CFE talks will not share the fate of MBFR, because of Gorbachev's innovative approach to arms control and his apparent need to trim the Soviet military machine and switch resources to the domestic economy.

"We have reason for hope. We have a number of signs in that the Eastern side, the Soviet leadership, is beginning to take a more realistic approach to the fundamental problem of the confrontation of conventional forces in Europe," chief U.S. negotiator, Stephen Ledogar, said recently.

The region under negotiation is vast — stretching from the Atlantic coast to the Ural mountains

that mark the eastern edge of Soviet European territory.

The new talks, from which nuclear and naval forces are excluded, will mark the first time that France, a NATO member but outside its integrated military command, has taken part in arms reduction negotiations.

No-one has any illusions that a formidable effort will be required to hammer out the details of a deal to meet the security considerations of 23 countries.

On the NATO side the run-up has been marked by concern in Norway on the northern flank and in Turkey in the south that their security interests might be compromised if the allies focus attention on central Europe.

"Superpower talks involving only the United States and the Soviet Union are child's play alongside what we are going to see in Vienna," one NATO official predicted.

How to verify a final deal against cheating with inspections in the countries concerned is likely to be a nightmare.

Unlike in MBFR, the NATO allies will focus on ways of cutting

weapon systems rather than manpower.

They are seeking to curb the Warsaw Pact's ability to launch a "short-notice" offensive against front-line West Germany that would catch the West off guard.

Their opening bargaining position will be to propose equal ceilings for three main types of weapons that can seize terrain — tanks, artillery and armoured troop-carriers. But that will mean deep cuts on the Soviet side while NATO reduces its forces by only a fraction.

NATO has proposed tank reductions to an equal ceiling of 20,000 on each side which would, according to its figures, mean the pact cutting by 37,000 tanks against 2,200 by the alliance.

It is also pressing for no one country to hold more than 12,000 tanks — a limit that would particularly hit the Soviet Union which NATO says has 37,000 tanks in the area.

A differing Soviet assessment of the military balance on January 30 suggests there will be wrangling over how to agree on mutually-acceptable definitions

of key weapons categories.

"Defining what exactly constitutes an armoured infantry vehicle or what constitutes a main battle tank or a light tank a formidable questions to so out," Colonel Andrew Duncan, the London-based International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS) said.

"One of the first things we are going to have to do is to make sure we are both counting apples when we are discussing apples," Ledogar said.

The Soviet Union has also served notice that it wants to attack aircraft. But NATO reluctant to concede this early on since it would rely heavily on aircraft to combat a breakthrough by Soviet ground forces in a war.

Once interim agreements have been worked out on how large the reductions should be, the will then be the question of where the cuts should fall and on what forces. Both sides will want reductions in the others' front-line forces.

But diplomats say that is far into the future.

Drinking water in Amman — quashing the bubbles

(Continued from page 1)

(PCB) pose a significant risk to water consumers in Amman, especially to breast-fed babies.

5. Excess nitrate in Amman's drinking water poses a threat to babies.

6. Chlorination is not an appropriate water treatment.

In fact, none of these statements is true.

A more accurate representation of the facts is as follows:

1. The Zai water treatment plant is more than capable of treating the water in the East Ghor Canal. It is a state-of-the-art surface water treatment plant designed to treat water with widely varying quality. It has a multitude of possible treatment processes that allow it to treat water of much poorer quality than that currently found in the East Ghor Canal.

Treatment plants of similar design are used throughout the world to successfully treat surface water for municipal supply.

2. Trihalomethanes (THM) are formed when raw water containing organic material is treated with chlorine. The amount of THM formed depends on the amount of organic matter in the raw water, the amount of chlorine added, the length of contact time of the chlorine with the water, the pH and the temperature.

Chloroform (one form of THM) has been shown to cause cancer in rats when given in extremely high doses. Several epidemiological studies in the U.S. have shown a relationship between exposure to THM in drinking water and increased rates of certain types of cancer. However, the National Academy of Sciences Safe Drinking Water Committee concluded that a cause-and-effect relationship had not been established.

The amount of organic material in the raw water entering the Zai plant is relatively low compared to surface waters used for municipal supply in other parts of the world. In addition, the amount of THM

formation is minimised during treatment by the use of permanganate to destroy organic material prior to chlorination, by the use of activated carbon to remove additional organic matter, by chlorinating late in the process to minimise contact time, and by using the minimum amount of chlorine necessary, consistent with effective treatment.

In anticipation of the presence of organic material in the water, WAJ instituted a monitoring programme designed to assess the concentration of total organic material (TOC) throughout the system. TOC is measured from the intake at Deir Alla to the terminal reservoir in Amman. These measurements provide a management tool to reduce the amount of TOC in the water and consequently to minimise the formation of THM.

The results of monitoring have shown a gradual reduction in TOC resulting from the coordinated action of WAJ and the Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) to protect the water course from introduction of harmful substances either naturally or by human action.

There are no reliable data that demonstrate excessive THM concentration in Amman water. It is unlikely that THMs pose a significant risk to consumers of municipal water in Amman.

3. Polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbon (PAH), both natural and man-made, are widely distributed in the environment. The major non-natural environmental sources are from combustion of fossil fuels, and from cooked food. Many PAH compounds, have been shown to produce tumours. PAH compounds tend to localise in the body in fatty tissues, but show little tendency to accumulate there or to undergo bioconcentration because PAH are rapidly and extensively metabolised.

The major exposure of people to PAH comes from food, where it forms during cooking.

Water is an insignificant source of PAH. Typically less than one-tenth of one per cent of daily PAH intake comes from drinking-water.

Approximately two-thirds of the PAH in water are bound to particulate matter, and are removed by filtration during treatment. Much of the remaining PAH is removed by oxidation. Chlorination removes 50-60 per cent of PAH while filtration with activated carbon removes up to 99 per cent. All three of these processes are used at the Zai treatment plant.

PAH are likely to be an insignificant risk to consumers of municipal water in Amman.

4. Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB) is another item on the shopping list of environmental contaminants presented in the article that have no relevance to the water supply in Amman. It is irresponsible in the extreme to frighten mothers that drinking Amman water may bring harm to their babies through breast feeding.

It is also inconceivable that a statement like is published "the mother is feeding her baby contaminated fat..." in breast milk without the most stringent verification of the true risk.

Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB) are not generally considered a risk in drinking water. Neither the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency nor the World Health Organisation (WHO) regulates the amount of PCB in drinking water. Although PCBs are ubiquitous in the environment, serious contamination by PCB is usually found in highly industrialised areas where there has been disposal of numbers of powerline transformers. The most likely water-related route of exposure for humans is through consumption of fish, which greatly magnify any PCB contamination from the water in which they live.

The area surrounding the East Ghor Canal is not highly industrialised, nor are fish from the canal a significant portion

of the diet of Amman residents.

PCBs are likely to be an insignificant risk to consumers of municipal water in Amman.

5. Although nitrate, at high concentration, can contribute to the occurrence of methemoglobinemia in bottle-fed infants, the nitrate concentration in the East Ghor Canal is at least ten times lower than the accepted national and international standard.

Some groundwater sources in the Amman area exceed recommended nitrate concentration. These sources are used only after the water is blended with higher quality water, such as that from the East Ghor Canal. No water supplied to any resident in Jordan exceeds the applicable quality standard for nitrate.

WAJ is keenly aware of the risks of high nitrate, and maintains a continuous monitoring programme to test for nitrate. The records of this programme are available for inspection by any interested party.

There is no risk from high nitrate concentration to consumers of municipal water in Amman.

6. Chlorination is the treatment method of choice for municipal water supplies throughout the world. Chlorination is effective, relatively inexpensive, forgiving of considerable variation in treatment parameters, and it provides a residual disinfection effect throughout the distribution network.

Chlorine dioxide treatment is expensive and requires very close control of operating parameters to avoid formation of a variety of potentially harmful substances.

Ozone treatment is expensive, and provides no residual disinfection. Most ozone treatment systems add chlorine after ozone treatment to provide for residual disinfection. Ozone treatment also produces byproducts whose effects are not well known, and may be harmful.

The formation of any poten-

tially harmful substances as a result of chlorination during the treatment process can be minimised in a modern treatment plant such as the Zai plant by careful process control. The risks of loss of life from inadequate disinfection, which can be as high as thousands per day, far outweigh the possible risks of treatment by chlorination.

Treatment by chlorination is not a risk, but rather a considerable benefit to consumers of municipal water in Amman.

In addition to these general comments, there are some specific statements in the article that require comment.

Dr. Elias Salameh stated that the 1987 Thames Report specified certain specific preconditions before King Abdullah Canal water could be supplied for domestic use. In fact, on page 77 of the Thames Report it is stated, "In general, the King Abdullah Canal water was suitable for the type of treatment afforded by the Zai system." The items mentioned by Dr. Salameh were offered as suggestions for further precaution, not as preconditions for use of KAC water (ref. pg. 39, Thames Report).

Nevertheless, all precautionary measures recommended in the Thames Report have been instituted by WAJ as a means to ensure that water delivered to Amman from the Zai system meets the highest standards of quality and safety.

Dr. Salameh also stated that the THM level in the King Abdullah Canal was "far above international standards." In fact, prior to delivery of water from Zai to Amman, two samples were analysed for THM. The RSS obtained a result of 5 ppb (parts per billion), and Dr. Salameh's laboratory at the University obtained a result of 80 ppb. Aside from the considerable difference in these results, which leads one to suspect the validity of the analysis, both these results are well within accepted standards for THM (the U.S. EPA stan-

dard is 100 ppb for total THM).

Recent analysis for total THM by the WAJ laboratories obtained values of 70 ppb for THM and less than 1 ppb for chloroform. The World Health Organisation (WHO) guideline for chloroform is 30 ppb.

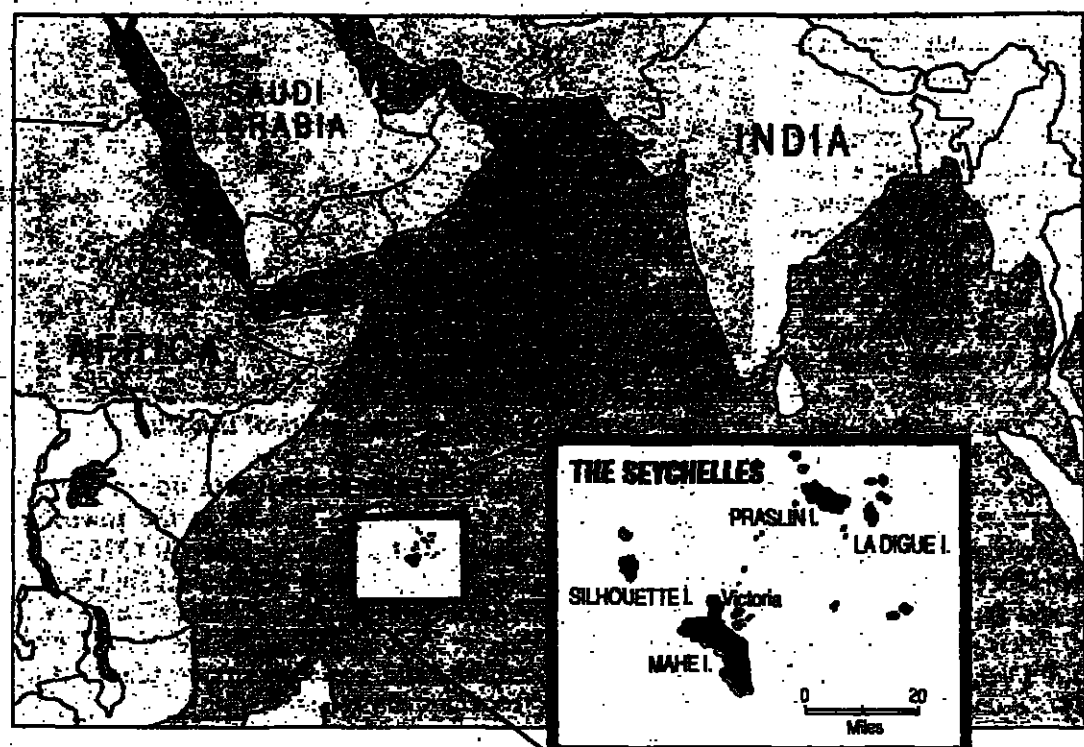
Dr. Salameh also stated that supplying water from the King Abdullah Canal is too expensive. He said that water should be supplied from the south of Jordan, and that such water would not require chlorination "because it is groundwater."

How it will be cheaper to pump water from the south of Jordan to Amman than it will be to pump it from the Jordan Valley needs considerable explanation, and Dr. Salameh offers no evidence in support of his assertion. The writer of the article should have required Dr. Salameh to justify this assertion.

No one with a good grasp of the public health issues involved with supplying drinking water to municipal areas would suggest that water from any source could safely be supplied to Amman without chlorination. To assert that water does not need chlorination simply because it is groundwater shows a considerable lack of knowledge about water quality and water supply.

The quality of their drinking water is of vital concern to all people because water is necessary for life. Most people cannot choose their water supply, but must use the water supplied to them. The Water Authority of Jordan is keenly aware of this, and is continually improving its policies and practices in order to always supply water of the highest quality, in sufficient quantity, to meet the needs of consumers in Jordan.

Development and operation of the Zai treatment plant to supply high-quality water to the citizens of Amman is but one example of the many ways the WAJ responds to the ever-increasing demand for drinking water in Jordan.



Tourism fuels Seychelles economic boom

By Francis Midlongwa
Reuter

VICTORIA — The idyllic, sun-bathed and almost magical Seychelles islands depend on tens of thousands of wealthy tourists. They have fuelled the Archipelago's boom at a time when most economies of the Third World are in turmoil.

With virtually no natural resources to depend upon, the Seychelles' Socialist Government of President Albert Rene has had to somewhat tone down its previous left-wing rhetoric to try to woo the visitors, most of them from Britain, the United States, West Germany, Italy and South Africa.

In 1988, 77,050 tourists visited the Seychelles, a group of more than 100 coral and granite islands 1,000 kilometres off the East African coast, earning the coun-

try about (\$100 million), nearly 40 per cent of gross national product.

The 1988 figure represented an increase of 16 per cent over 1987 and was the driving force behind the island's 6.1 per cent real economic growth last year. Government officials forecast this will again be achieved, if not exceeded, in 1989.

The islands' economic growth has averaged about four per cent annually in the past four years. "We don't go for mass tourism, but for selected groups who have a high spending capacity," Kata Carolus, marketing director of the tourism department, said.

"We believe in providing quality service and have this added thing going for us — the unique beauty of the islands, the unspoiled beaches and the year-round sunshine," she said.

Her department is working on

plans to nearly double the number of hotel beds in the Seychelles by adding another 4,000 by 1992, when the country hopes to cater for 125,000 tourists who are expected to bring in \$171.5 million.

Limit no. of tourists

Carolus said the figure of 125,000 was the maximum that the Seychelles could cater for without straining the islands' resources.

"Thereafter, we shall limit the number of tourists as we may not cope," she said, interviewed in the fading brown coloured independence house, seat to most government departments in the capital Victoria, which blends spectacularly well with the white and brown sands of the beaches.

A government policy document just published says of tourism development plans: "A fun-

damental element is the preservation of the natural and physical environment... not just for visitors but for the Seychellois (citizens of the Seychelles) themselves."

It says steps will be taken to control removal of sand for construction from beaches, prevent the encroachment of buildings on the beaches and keep them clean.

Tourism and its related industries employ more than 12 per cent of the islands' workforce of 20,000 people.

As well as tourism, the Seychelles is now beginning to develop the tuna fishing industry, which last year became the second largest earner of foreign currency after tourism, hauling in \$4.16 million.

But local economists are worried about the Seychelles' heavy reliance on tourism and fishing.

"The Seychelles is very vulnerable as it is dependent on two moving things, tourists and tuna fish, whose movements it has no control of."

If the tuna migrated, as they often do, and there were a major problem in the industrialised countries so fewer tourists came, the Seychelles would virtually collapse, he added.

Tourism suffered heavily just after a failed 1981 coup by South African-led foreign mercenaries. Asked whether there was a contradiction in having large number of South African tourists visiting the Seychelles when Rene's government is fiercely anti-South Africa, Carolus said:

"We don't undertake any tourism promotion in South Africa but surprisingly they (South Africans) come here. We, of course, welcome all visitors so long as they respect our laws and are genuine tourists."

The pleasure and pain of punditry

From the dawn of history, certain individuals have been treated with a mixture of awe and hostility because of their (usually erratic) ability to foretell the future. In Egypt they were priests, shamans in Siberia, prophets in the wilderness — and economic forecasters in the modern world. An OECD forecaster explains the hazards of his profession.

By Nicholas Vanston

PARIS — The tools of trade of the professional forecaster have varied over the millennia, but have generally consisted of something more or less concrete — tea leaves, animal entrails, computer listings — together with a large measure of subjective judgement.

Forecasters make their living by "interpreting the data." A successful forecaster may be simply lucky, or have a flair based on experience, knowledge, a good memory, and the ability to put together seemingly unrelated bits of information which then spell a message.

No one knows what went on in the mind of a Roman augur. Twentieth-century observers find it difficult to believe that the birth of a two-headed calf in Germany would inexorably lead to the death of an emperor in Rome, for example, but perhaps the forecaster concerned had already noticed signs of a fatal illness in the emperor-in-question.

Nowadays, forecasters — economic forecasters, at any rate — are much more inclined to place their faith in empirically established and theoretically satisfactory causal mechanisms.

If the government raises tax rates, people will have less money

to spend than previously, so they will probably spend less, and sales will fall. By analysing what happened in the past in similar circumstances, the forecaster hopes to be able to make a reasonably accurate prediction of what would happen in the future.

Alternatives

Virtually all economic forecasting is based on this method. Relationships which were stable in the past are assumed to remain so in the future. Economic forecasters are therefore accused of "steering the car by looking in the rear mirror." It is a fair criticism, but if the windscreen is opaque, and as long as the road is reasonably straight and broad, what is the alternative?

The methods used by economic forecasters are similar to those used by scientists. Astronomers can predict eclipses of the sun or the moon to within a fraction of a second scores of years in advance. Rocket engineers can predict the trajectory of an interplanetary probe to within a few metres when it is a million kilometres from Earth.

How? Because the laws which govern gravitational attraction between large objects have already been established to a very high degree of accuracy, and it is

safe to assume that they will continue to operate.

On the other hand, it is inherently impossible to measure both the position and the velocity of an electron or other elementary particles. The smaller the object the fuzzier it becomes when you try to take a closer look at it. The highly accurate predictions of astronomers and engineers are possible only because they are dealing with large objects.

For the economic forecaster, people are electrons: their individual behaviour is unpredictable. Individual decisions as to what to buy, how much to buy, where to work, what sort of work to do, and so on, are influenced by many factors, only some of them economic. But with a large number of individuals, many of the non-economic factors tend to cancel one another out and predicting behaviour, say of households in a country, becomes easier than predicting the behaviour of just one household.

But the non-economic factors never "cancel themselves out" entirely and so there is inevitably a margin of uncertainty in any economic prediction. Worse than this, the economic laws themselves change through time as institutions evolve and as the structure of society itself changes.

Irrelevant tools

In the 1950s and '60s, for example, mainstream economists believed that they understood how industrial economies functioned and how to keep them growing at top efficiency with low unemployment and low inflation. But as inflation rose the traditional ways of controlling it seemed no longer to work very well. The oil price shocks of the 1970s plunged the OECD into recession. The old tools appeared to be irrelevant.

But were they really? In fact they were ill-adapted to the new problems. It was like trying to extract screws with a pair of pliers. With experience the economists have found the screwdriver, as it were, and the inventory of forecasting tools now is larger than ever before. Whether it is as big as the problems presented to the experts today remains moot however.

With the world's stock markets connected 24 hours a day and information flowing at an unprecedented pace and in unprecedented volumes, analysis and prediction has reached a new sophistication and speed. At the same time, economists have become more ambitious. No longer content with simply "running equations" in order to make quantitative estimates of, say, the impact of a 10 per cent rise in the price of bread on the demand for jam, economists now construct very large multi-equation models of individuals, markets, countries even the world.

The rationale for constructing such models is that although one may well have clear ideas of how the individual bits and pieces of a system work, it is extraordinarily

difficult to analyse how the complete system in which they are embedded will function if one sector is nudged a little.

If there is one ball on a billiards table, it is fairly easy to guess where it will end up if it is hit in a certain direction. But if there is a score of them, working out where they will all end up after they have rebounded off one another repeatedly as well as off the sides of the table is a problem that requires some difficult mathematics and a lot of calculation. In economics, moreover, the billiards table is not even flat and it keeps changing its size and shape.

Interlinks

But governments have to know where all the balls are at any given moment and various institutions, of which the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is one, have devoted much time and computing facilities to building large models in order to tell them. The OECD model is known as "Interlink", it is one of the few existing models that actually analyses the entire world.

Unlike the soothsayers of old, the OECD forecasters are not paid to tell governments and the wider world what will happen. They are paid to tell governments what the most likely outcome will be if economic policies are not changed.

It often happens therefore that outcomes are quite different from those projected, because economic policies were changed in the meantime (perhaps on account of the forecasts themselves). It also happens that outcomes are different even when the assumptions proved to be accurate — we all make mistakes. When the price of oil fell sharply in 1986, the OECD secretariat forecast that inflation would accelerate substantially after a short delay. In fact, it took a year or more for growth to respond.

Sometimes we get it right — well, nearly. After the stock-market crisis in October 1987 we said that there would be no recession, but that growth would slow down. There was no recession, and growth did slow down.

We come in for our fair share of gentle ridicule from the press and from our colleagues when our projections go wrong, but no member government seriously questions the value of our forecasting work, and certainly media interest in our forecasts remains high. — Academic File.

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Tunisia to speed up privatisation

TUNIS (R) — The Tunisian government will speed up its privatisation programme this year to make up for time lost last year because of drought, central bank governor Ismail Khelil has said.

Khelil told Reuters in an interview the government went slow on privatisation during 1988 because the drought produced unemployment and it did not want to exacerbate the problem by selling off state companies with labour surpluses.

"We will accelerate the process this year. The public sector now accounts for 60 per cent of the economy and we still plan to bring that down to 40 per cent by the end of 1991," he said.

The next targets for privatisation are three hotels in the Tanit chain, some textile and building material factories and some small subsidiaries of the state-owned Societe Tunisienne de Banque, he added.

Khelil said that provided good rains continued into March, the grain harvest would be normal and overall economic growth could meet the budgeted target of 5.5 per cent.

The disastrous harvest of 1988, when grain output was about one sixth of the average, cut economic growth to 1.5 per cent, revised from an original estimate of 0.9 per cent.

The governor said he expected tourism revenues to show a slight progression in 1989 after the boom year of 1988, when tourism receipts in foreign exchange jumped almost 90 per cent to reach 1,080 million dinars (\$1.150 million).

The boom helped produce the first balance of payments surplus in Tunisia's modern history — about 20 million dinars (\$21 million) — and brought foreign exchange reserves up to 733 million dinars (\$785 million), equivalent to 85 days' imports, by the end of the year, he added.

As a result Tunisia had still not used any of the extended financing facility of 207 million Special Drawing Rights (\$270 million)

available to it from the International Monetary Fund.

The country might resort to the facility during 1989, however, to cover a balance of payments expected to slip back into deficit, he added.

Budget documents forecast that grants and long-term loans will more than cover a current account deficit of 285 million dinars (\$305 million) in 1989.

"On reserves, we've made great progress... I think if we continue to improve our reserves then we can start to make the dinar convertible during the next five-year plan (which starts in 1992), gradually of course," he said.

The aim of convertibility would be to encourage the foreign investment which Tunisia needed to speed up economic growth and prevent an increase in unemployment. Unemployment already stands at about 15 per cent overall and is higher among youngsters.

"We cannot rely only on domestic savings for this. When we start to relax the foreign exchange restrictions, it would attract investors from outside," Khelil said.

The central bank has been planning to introduce a limited foreign exchange market in Tunisia to give the local banks experience of currency dealing.

The governor said the new market, which will draw its resources mainly from the retained foreign exchange earnings of exporters, should start operating very soon.

But the central bank will retain control of the interest rates prevailing in the market, against the wishes of the Tunis-based offshore banks which will be allowed to take part.

"It's too early to float the rate... it will be a small market and we cannot leave it to foreign forces," he said.

The rate would however in the same range as those on international markets "so that there won't be any distortion."

Turks frenzy over shares

ISTANBUL (R) — Crowds of frenzied investors pushed trading volume at the Istanbul Stock Exchange to an all-time high as Turkish stocks hit a 1989 peak Thursday.

"Look at this," shouted one dealer amid hectic bidding. "Two months ago nobody cared. Now everyone is thirsty to trade."

The index hit a high of 563.82 before closing at 548.68 after profit-takers moved in. Trading volume was a record 3.083 billion lira (\$1.5 million).

At the exchange, a crowd of about 900 people strained to see the prices. They included elderly shopkeepers, university students, smart young businessmen and even gold dealers from the bazaar.

"One dealer gave a hundred million lira (\$50,000) cheque to his young shop-runner and sent him down here. He told the boy to buy whatever he thought best," one banker said.

The rise in the index of 4.3 per cent Thursday and 29.2 per cent since last Friday was due to the price of shares being seen as undervalued, to cuts in bank deposit rates, expectations of lower inflation and poor returns from investment in gold and foreign currencies, bankers said.

"Why should I buy gold or deposit my money in banks? They are all wiped out by the cost of living. So I am going to buy stocks," said an old woman.

The upturn in stocks also reflects good results from companies last year despite 75 per cent inflation.

The optimistic mood was underlined by Prime Minister Turgut Ozal as he described a \$1.5 billion balance of payments surplus in 1988 as "a historic turning point."

"Since 1973, Turkey had always had a deficit," Ozal told a news conference in Ankara.

Long-term hopes that prices will rise are linked to a \$60 million Turkish investment fund

due to be launched this summer. It is the first of several foreign mutual funds worth hundreds of millions of dollars waiting for permission to buy into Turkish stocks, bankers say.

"Prices are still low and the run will go on until they reach a realistic level... a share in a water company was costing less than a bottle of the water it made," said Muharrem Karsh, chairman of the Istanbul Stock Exchange.

The index is based on 100 in January 1986 when the stock exchange was reformed. It hit a high of 1,332 in August 1987 just before the October crash. It reached a post-crash low of 362 in November 1988. Many losses have been held over from the crash.

Market officials said investors had become more mature and calculating since the speculative boom of 1987, when people were ruined after selling house-and-home for shares.

The exchange still attracts all types, including bearded Islamic fundamentalists wearing skull-caps.

"In our religion interest is banned," said shopkeeper Bekir Karaban. "Here there is no interest but buy-and-sell profit. I am just waiting for the right time to buy."

Top financial regulator sees more foreign ownership of U.S. banks

WASHINGTON (R) — European and Japanese firms are increasing their ownership of U.S. banks, which are handicapped against world competition by outdated federal regulations, the chairman of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. (FDIC), L. William Seidman has said.

Congress will be forced to consider modernising bank law and granting American banks the power to enter new areas due to the crisis in the U.S. savings and loan (SL) industry, Seidman told Reuters in an interview.

President Bush's recent reform proposals, designed to rescue the 500-plus insolvent thrifts, could enable Congress to change banking law, Seidman said. Bush proposes giving the FDIC responsibility for managing the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corp. (FSLIC) — which insures thrifts — although two separate funds will be maintained.

"Obviously Congress is very interested in avoiding another incident like the SL mess, which is going to cost \$100 billion or more," said Seidman, whose agency regulates 14,000 U.S. banks and insures their deposits.

Such reforms would come at a time when European and Japanese banks are flexing their financial muscle around the world. The European Community's drive to shed internal trade barriers by 1992 will give its 12 member nations more strength in global markets, Seidman said.

"Europe, with its 1992, is going

to represent powerful forces for acquisitions of financial institutions around the world," Seidman said. France boasts three of the world's top 20 banks, while Britain has two and West Germany has one.

In addition, Japan is considering changes that would move away from American-style traditional banking to a European system of universal banks engaging in a variety of financial services, he said. Nine of the world's top 10 banks are Japanese — all except No. 8 Citicorp.

But U.S. banks are prevented from developing a national base of deposits or from entering lucrative areas such as underwriting and dealing securities because of laws such as the 1933 Glass-Steagall Act — the "wall" between commercial and investment banking, the chairman said.

Seidman suggested that Congress, which wants to reduce risk for federally insured institutions while letting them match foreign competition, should let banks and thrifts conduct new activities through a parent firm or separate unit.

A factor in the SL crisis was the freedom some states gave thrifts to engage in speculation while the government guaranteed deposits through the FSLIC.

"There is going to be great pressure as they (Congress) try to narrow the risks of deposit insurance to let them (banks) compete by doing these other things in a separate institution which has

firewalls between it," Seidman said, referring to the "firewalls" that would insulate a bank or thrift from a risk-taking subsidiary in case the unit fails.

Seidman said he hopes Congress would agree this year to let states grant new powers to banks through these separate units.

Risk of interest rates

On another matter, Seidman said the U.S. thrift crisis is further imperilled by current high interest rates.

Rising rates increase the costs of rescuing SLs, Seidman said, adding: "A substantial increase in interest rates could threaten a great many more thrifts in terms of their viability."

Higher interest rates have long hurt insured financial institutions because they are slower to raise rates than money market funds, Seidman said.

Net withdrawals from U.S. thrifts were between \$4 billion and \$5 billion last month, Federal Home Loan Bank Board Chairman M. Danny Wall has said, without giving any figures for comparison.

Wall, whose bank board oversees the FSLIC, attributed the withdrawals partly to "normal

disintermediation," which occurs when other investments such as money-market mutual funds offer higher returns than thrifts.

Seidman said such withdrawals were not a problem, adding: "There has been a slow take-down of deposits that was going on several months. I don't think we are seeing much more than we would expect."

Bush has given the FDIC new powers to manage hundreds of insolvent SLs while Congress considers reform laws. Seidman predicts that Congress will approve Bush's SL rescue plan, which would raise \$50 billion to close or sell involvement through bond sales.

Meanwhile, Seidman said Capitol Hill has strong sentiment toward changing a provision that would make the head of the Federal Home Loan Bank system — which oversees the thrift industry — subject to the treasury secretary.

Seidman said the FDIC should break even this year or bolster reserves slightly, even though it will face over 100 bank failures. Bank failures and assistance deals totalled a record 221 last year, dipping the agency's reserves \$4 billion to \$14 billion.

ECONOMIC NEWS BRIEFS

Vietnam drops economic rigidity

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP) — Vietnam's ruling Communist Party has relinquished its monopoly on directing the economy and granted a much greater role to the government and parliament, a Vietnamese government adviser has said. The party realised that its rigid socialist economic policies had failed and fundamental reforms were needed, said adviser Nguyen Xuan Oanh. He said the party decided to restrict its role in economic matters to overall policies and leave the implementation to the government and the national assembly. The decision was announced at the assembly's session last December, he said. "The frame within which the government and the national assembly operate is much bigger," Oanh told a news conference. "We are getting much closer to the Western model of parliamentary government." Since pragmatist Nguyen Van Linh became Communist Party chief in December 1986, the party has adopted a series of reforms aimed at fostering a more market-oriented economy and has promised some political and social liberalisation.

Japan stays top investor in Australia

CANBERRA (AP) — Japan remains the largest foreign investor in Australia with most money being spent on real estate, according to government figures. The Foreign Investment Review Board said Japanese investments last year reached the equivalent of \$4.3 billion, an almost 70 per cent increase from \$2.6 billion the year before. Total overseas investments in Australia last year reached almost \$20 billion, the board said. Britain was the second largest foreign investor in Australia with \$3.8 billion, followed by New Zealand with \$2.2 billion and the United States with \$1.4 billion. The board said nearly 60 per cent of Japanese investment went to buy and develop tourist facilities and other real estate, mainly in the states of Queensland and New South Wales. Japanese investments have triggered a backlash in Australia with critics accusing the Japanese of pushing up land and housing prices. The federal government, which strongly supports Japanese investments, has asked the Tokyo government and Japanese companies to try to direct more investment into manufacturing.

Malaysian palm oil output shoots up

KUALA LUMPUR (AP) — Malaysia's total palm oil production surpassed five million tons in 1988, the Palm Oil Registration and Licensing Authority has said in a report. Last year's production reached a combined 5.03 million tons, up 10.9 per cent over the previous year's output of 4.53 million tons.

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China may have 250m surplus workers by 2000

BEIJING (AP) — China will have 240 to 260 million surplus workers by the end of the century, threatening serious economic disruption if more jobs aren't found, an official daily newspaper said Thursday.

The Economic Daily (Jingji Ribao) said more than 200 million of the surplus labourers reside in overpopulated rural areas.

The report came as cities in this nation of one billion try to cope with a deluge of rural migrants looking for better-paying city jobs.

The prosperous southern province of Guangdong, for example, has put out an emergency appeal to the state to help it handle 2.5 million mostly rural outsiders who have flocked to the province in recent weeks.

The daily, citing a report by the China Rural Development Research Centre, said China's labour force is growing by an estimated 10 million a year, outstripping the number of new jobs.

The State Statistical Bureau said last week that the urban work force increased by 3.6 million last year, to 135.7 million.

The report did not estimate how many of the surplus workers would be unemployed. Although

the government has called on businesses to operate more efficiently, most state-run plants continue to retain their excess workers rather than lay them off.

Economists say 20 to 30 million of the urban work force is excess manpower that could be cut without affecting production.

In the countryside, some 80 million peasants have left the farm to work at small rural enterprises that have shot up during the past decade of economic reforms.

However, many of these enterprises are now in trouble or closing down because of inefficiency, lack of energy and basic materials, or a cutoff in credit as the government moves to slow down the overheated economy.

The report said that while labourers exceed job opportunities in China's underdeveloped areas, there is still a demand for labour in developed sections of the country.

It suggested an easing of the nation's strict residence regulations to allow for greater worker mobility. The country should also set up a special rural labour development organisation to organise rural labourers for work on the international labour market, it said.

World Bank suspends credits to Argentina

WASHINGTON (AP) — The World Bank Thursday held up \$350 million worth of instalments on two loans to Argentina, saying the country failed to meet all conditions in making economic reforms, bank officials said.

"Much has been done by the government to implement its reform programmes," said the officials, who briefed a reporter on condition they not be identified. "However, specific conditions (for release of the instalments) have not been met yet."

The officials declined to specify the unmet conditions, but they said the loans involved were to improve trade policy and to make banks more effective.

"Recognising the serious efforts made by the government by the past six months, the World Bank continues to support Argentina's efforts to restructure its economy by regaining de-

velopment growth," the officials said.

Last October, the bank approved four loans worth \$1.25 billion for Argentina, one of the most heavily indebted countries in Latin America. Argentine foreign debt is about \$55 billion.

Bank officials said that so far the bank had given \$254 million of the package to Argentina.

The action taken Thursday was to "defer the authorisation for disbursement" of "tranches" or instalments of the \$300 million trade loan and the \$400 million banking loan.

The bank had extended the first half of the trade loan and was planning to hand over the second half of that loan plus the first half of the banking-sector loan for a total of \$350 million.

The package approved last October also included two investment loans.

Peru imposes second austerity programme

LIMA (AP) — The government imposed the second in a series of four monthly austerity packages, aimed at reducing Peru's record inflation by cutting government subsidies.

Consumer prices rose 42.5 per cent in February, the National Statistics Institute has reported, despite an initial austerity plan launched Feb. 1.

The measures imposed included a currency devaluation of 23.3 per cent, reducing the value of the official rate Peruvian currency, the inti, from 200 to 1,200 to the dollar.

In addition, the prices of products subsidised by the government were increased. Consumer prices for basic foods, such as wheat, cooking oil and milk, were increased between 33 per cent and 50 per cent, and gasoline went up 28 per cent, according to the government.

The minimum monthly wage rose from 42,000 intis to 55,000, equivalent to \$46 at the official rate, and salaries for all state employees and non-unionised

private workers rose a similar percentage.

The government has acknowledged that inflation will continue to rise in the short term because of the price and wage increases. But the government said inflation eventually would decline with a decrease in government spending for subsidies.

Independent economists said President Alan Garcia's economic policies, which previously involved subsidies on a wide range of consumer and industrial goods, caused heavy deficit spending.

They said the government's deficit was the major reason for Peru's high inflation, which hit an all-time record last year of 1,722 per cent.

Before the programme of austerity measures, which concludes in May, the government had been steadily reducing the types of products it subsidises.

Now, most imported products must be purchased at the floating free market exchange rate, which was 1,300 intis to the dollar and unchanged by the new measures.

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WORLD STOCK MARKETS

SYDNEY — Australian stocks surged again as investor optimism about steady interest rates swept through the national market. The All-Ordinaries Index rose 14.0 to 1,508.9.

TOKYO — Share prices fell after the bond market took a sharp downturn when Bank of Japan Governor Satoshi Sumita said Japan would take adequate and early action to maintain price stability if necessary. The Nikkei fell 73.63 to 32,000.10.

HONG KONG — Stocks closed sharply higher, in line with Wall Street's firmer levels, as investors discounted an expected prime rate rise later Friday afternoon. The Hang Seng index rose 46.10 to 3,056.58.

SINGAPORE — Renewed buying interest pushed share prices higher over a broad front in active trading ahead of a budget statement. The Straits Times Industrial Index rose 12.95 points to 1,118.42.

BOMBAY — Share prices salvaged fresh gains for a second successive day on continued buying by the state-owned financial institutions. In textiles, Century shot up 125 rupees to 1,660.

FRANKFURT — Shares ended a turbulent week sharply higher as the market rebounded vigorously on short-covering. The Real-Time 30-share Dax Index closed at 1,325.82, 1.3 per cent or 16.55 points above the previous close.

ZURICH — Shares closed higher in moderate trading with banks attracting good demand after good 1988 Credit Suisse results. The All-Share Index added 9.1 points to 967.9.

PARIS — Share prices ended at highs after a moderate session in average volume but with buying focussed on blue chips. The 50-share price index ended 1.31 per cent higher.

LONDON — Share prices were off their days highs as Wall Street showed a small early decline and buying interest ran out of steam. By 1603 GMT the FTSE 100 index was up 17.5 points to 2,057.2.

NEW YORK — Stocks were narrowly lower with traders reluctant to take long positions ahead of the weekend. The Dow was off four at 2262.

Panel 1: A man and woman are hugging. A man in a suit is running towards them. A speech bubble from the man in the suit says: "I'LL BE IN THE VICINITY OF THE PUB, PET". A thought bubble above him says: "THINK THINK".

Panel 2: The man in the suit is running away. A speech bubble from him says: "YOU'RE TOO SOFT WITH HIM, FLO - HE SHOULD BE OUT ON HIS BIKE, FINDING A JOB." A thought bubble above him says: "THINK THINK".

Panel 3: The man and woman are hugging. A speech bubble from the woman says: "FIRST THINGS FIRST, DEAR - HE'S GOT TO FIND HIS BIKE".

Panel 4: The man and woman are hugging. A speech bubble from the woman says: "FIRST THINGS FIRST, DEAR - HE'S GOT TO FIND HIS BIKE".



Making an impact... A Venezuelan protester smashes in the roof of a car amid protests on price increases.

Uneasy calm in Venezuela

CARACAS (AP) — Soldiers hunted for snipers early Friday and the sound of automatic weapons echoed through the capital before dawn. But the president's chief of staff said the city was returning to normal after four days of riots that reportedly left more than 300 dead.

The government Friday was to open food-distribution centres to relieve shortages caused by the unrest's widespread looting.

El Nacional, a leading independent newspaper, reported that more than 300 people died, 1,500 were injured and 3,000 arrested in the capital since the violence began Monday night in protest of new government austerity measures that included increases in bus fares and gasoline prices.

As a third dusk-to-dawn curfew settled over the city Thursday night, soldiers continued house-to-house searches in downtown Caracas and in the capital's western slums, looking for snipers and looted merchandise.

In one case, soldiers fired at a balcony when they saw people standing there, frightening them back inside.

In a nationwide television broadcast Thursday night, President Carlos Andres Perez' chief of staff said the capital was steadily returning to normal, but acknowledged that there were still "pockets

of disturbance" that the military was trying to quell.

"There is a growing process of normalisation in the capital," said Reinaldo Figueredo.

He urged Venezuelans to go back to work and promised public transportation would resume normal schedules.

Venezuelans, unaccustomed to being in a state of emergency after three decades of political stability, have tended to remain on the streets despite the curfew, making soldiers nervous.

Growing food shortages threatened to thwart the government's attempts to restore order following four days of agitation over price hikes.

Looters emptied the shelves of supermarkets and neighbourhood grocery stores in the early days of rioting. Since then, soldiers have guarded stores, where people have been waiting hours in line to buy such staples as eggs, bread and cheese.

Figueredo said the government was setting up a food-distribution network in the capital of four million people with supplies airlifted from around the country.

As part of its effort to relieve the shortages, the government has exempted drivers of food trucks from the curfew.

"The industrialised nations have to be aware of the route they are sending Latin America down," said Perez.

Bonn computer hackers exposed

BONN (R) — A television network said five West German computer hackers have been arrested for giving passwords and secrets from western military and industrial computers to the Soviet KGB.

A federal prosecutor's spokesman partially confirmed the espionage case, reported Thursday night by the ARD television network, but said three hackers were arrested on suspicion.

Spokesman Alexander Prechtel told Reuters two hackers in West Germany and one in West Berlin were being held on suspicion of infiltrating computer networks worldwide to obtain secret data for an East bloc spy agency.

Prechtel declined to identify the East bloc country or the computer networks infiltrated.

ARD's "Panorama" public-affairs programme said the hackers provided the KGB with passwords and secret data from military, industrial and research computer networks in the United States, Western Europe and Japan.

Among the systems infiltrated, it said, were the U.S. Defence Department's general staff data bank Optimis, the U.S. nuclear arms laboratory in Los Alamos, New Mexico, the U.S. space agency NASA, and various U.S. military supply depots.

The hackers, using home computers, also penetrated data banks of the French-Italian arms maker Thomson, the West European nuclear research centre Cern in Geneva, the European

Space Agency (ESA) and the Max Planck Institute for Nuclear Physics in West Germany, it said.

Information on state-of-the-art computer programmes and blueprints for making microchips was stolen from West European electronics companies, Panorama said.

Other countries where sensitive computer systems were penetrated included Britain, Italy and Switzerland, it said.

West German security police raided six homes in West Berlin, Hanover and Hamburg Thursday in search of evidence, the television report said.

The Panorama report said five hackers were arrested, although an ARD statement released before the report aired said three were arrested. The discrepancy could not be immediately clarified.

Panorama said the KGB recruited the hackers in 1985 and paid them several hundred thousand marks (dollars). One hacker was a drug addict and also received drugs, it reported.

KGB agents spirited the data out on the subway train from West Berlin to communist East Berlin, where the Soviet spy agency has a large office, Panorama said.

The programme said it was the worst known espionage case in West Germany since the 1974 exposure of Guenter Guillaume, an East German spy who was a top aide to then-West German Chancellor Willy Brandt.

Ethiopian soldiers stranded in Tigray amid rebel advance

NAIROBI (AP) — A government order to abandon war-torn northern Ethiopia has stranded some government soldiers and troops for lack of transport, a diplomatic source said Friday.

"There are no government troops fighting there," the foreign envoy, who has long experience in Ethiopia, told the AP by telephone from the capital of Addis Ababa.

"I understand it will take them a long time before they can return," the source added. He spoke only on condition he not be identified.

The government Monday ordered troops, civil servants and political commissars to evacuate Tigray province following a series of victories by the rebel Tigre People's Liberation Front (TPLF).

"Even those who are left are in southern Tigray," said the envoy. "There are no government officials in the north."

However, the envoy said he did not know if the rebels had moved into the towns abandoned by the government.

On Thursday, President Mengistu Haile Mariam's government, in its first reference to rebel victories, told Ethiopians "to be ready for an active involvement in every area of the armed struggle," the official Ethiopian news agency reported.

"No nation can tolerate violence, and there is no alternative now except to join hands and diffuse the aggression launched against the Ethiopian people," the government said in a statement.

The statement made no direct

reference to Tuesday's reports by the insurgents that the government had evacuated Tigray's provincial capital, Makalle, "fearing humiliating and shaking defeat as in Enderbelle and surrounding areas."

Makalle is 770 kilometres northwest of Addis Ababa. The Tigray rebels have been fighting the government for 14 years to press for autonomy.

"The whole of Tigray is now liberated from the fascist regime of Mengistu," Yemane Kidane, a rebel spokesman in Sudan's capital, Khartoum, told the AP Tuesday.

The government statement said "the secessionist TPLF and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front had coordinated attacks against Ethiopian army along Adwa, Axum and Enderbelle route with the view to dismember the Ethiopian Red Sea area from the rest of the country."

Vietnamese boat people ponder why they did it

HANOI (R) — Lung Thanh Thuy is a pretty 21-year-old with an engaging smile and to this day she is still wondering what made her climb into a rickety fishing boat and head across the South China Sea to Hong Kong.

Thuy, one of 75 Vietnamese boat people who returned voluntarily to Hanoi Thursday under a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) sponsored scheme, told Reuters in an interview: "I honestly don't know why I did it. I was with a group of six friends and one night they said they were going. I just decided to follow."

"As soon as I got to Hong Kong I realised I made a mis-

take. I asked straight away to go back."

Officials in Vietnam, Hong Kong and other Asian countries are hoping that thousands of other Vietnamese boat people will do what Thuy did and opt to return to their homeland.

They faced a bleak future in Hong Kong. She arrived after a major change in government policy June 16 last year, and because she could not prove she was a genuine refugee under United Nations criteria, she was tagged an illegal immigrant and held in a detention centre pending repatriation.

Face with that, she said, she opted to return voluntarily

under a scheme agreed last year by Hong Kong, Britain, Vietnam and the UNHCR.

Vietnam has agreed not to punish those who return as long as they behave, a move seen by officials involved in the programme as the key to its success.

Thuy said she was under no illusions as to what could have happened on her return.

Sitting next to the boyfriend she met in the Hong Kong camp, she grinned and said: "I thought to myself if the government is generous when I return then I'll be grateful. But if I was to be punished, well, so be it."

A lively girl who said she loved the cinema and dancing,

Thuy will be reunited with her family Monday after medical checks in a holding centre near Hanoi.

But if teenagers and young people like Thuy are looking forward with happy anticipation of being able to resume their lives, others interviewed by Reuters were less than happy.

Nguyen Thi Tuan, a 43-year-old mother of three, managed the family restaurant in Hanoi until her abrupt decision to flee by boat in the hopes of reaching the United States by way of Hong Kong. She was plainly terrified of meeting her family again.

Throughout the interview

she twisted her hands nervously and several times dabbed her tear-filled eyes.

"I suppose I felt that as I can cook very well, I could go to the United States, set myself up and sponsor my children. But of course it couldn't work out like that," she said.

All those interviewed Friday said they preferred to live in Vietnam, although they were clearly uneasy at times when asked why they had left in the first place.

Western diplomats said that although Hanoi was determined to keep its word not to punish the returnees, it was possible they could face some form of harassment at local level.



Rajiv Gandhi makes Punjab moves

NEW DELHI (R) — Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi ordered the release of a group of Sikh separatists, some held since 1984, in a conciliatory move Friday aimed at ending violence in Punjab state.

The release order was among a series of measures announced by Gandhi in parliament.

The measures included lifting travel restrictions on foreigners in Punjab and withdrawal of special security force powers to arrest and try suspected Sikh separatists.

The release of an unspecified number of prisoners from jail in Rajasthan state, held there since a military operation against extremists in Punjab in 1984, is expected to lead to talks between hardline Sikhs and the government.

Some 367 Sikhs, mainly from the militant All India Students Federation, were detained in Jodhpur jail after the 1984 crackdown.

About 80 were freed between 1986 and 1988. Gandhi told the lower house of parliament Friday that Jodhpur detainees to be released under his new measures would not include those charged with specific crimes.

His announcement appeared a significant step towards resolving a conflict in which more than 150 people were killed in February alone, political analysts said.

The violence was triggered by a campaign by hardline Sikhs to gain greater political and economic autonomy for their prosperous state on India's border with Pakistan.

The campaign took a violent turn around 1982 with the emergence of extremists pledged to creating an independent Sikh nation carved out of Punjab.

Tower fight intensifies as decision nears

WASHINGTON (R) — Republicans blasted the latest charges of excessive drinking and womanising against John Tower as the battle over his nomination as defence secretary began in the U.S. Senate.

Their campaign to prove Tower has been the victim of character assassination got a boost Thursday when Senator John McCain of Arizona said a report that he fondled two women while drunk at an air force base was false.

The Washington Post had said that retired air force Sergeant Robert Jackson told the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Senate Armed Services Committee that Tower had fondled two women and appeared

drunk on two visits to Bergstrom air force base in Texas in 1976-78.

McCain said the base commander and three other officers had said that Tower made only one visit to the base in 1975 and produced a letter from the air force general counsel saying Jackson had been assigned to the base in 1976 and was retired on psychiatric grounds in 1978.

Republicans were quick to use the report and denial to try to seize the high ground in the debate over Tower, whom they portray as a dedicated public servant and a victim of press smears. "If they chased every man or woman out of this town who

shacked up with somebody else or gotten drunk, there'd be no government," former Senator Barry Goldwater told reporters Thursday.

But Democrats say that an accumulation of evidence contained in voluminous FBI reports shows Tower drank to excess and acted improperly toward women.

"The record of alcohol abuse by the nominee cannot be ignored," Armed Services Committee Chairman Sam Nunn said.

The FBI reports, summaries of interviews with named and unnamed persons, belong to the White House and are supposed to be confidential but have been the source of numerous leaks.

Democrat John Glenn of Ohio

tried to use some of the language in the reports by citing press accounts of their contents.

"Crooked, severely drunk, inebriated, loud and garrulous" were some of the words, he said.

Glenn's statement sparked an argument over whether he was setting a bad precedent by using press reports to discuss confidential documents and Glenn agreed to have them stricken from the record.

The administration needs to win the votes of at least five of the Senate's 55 Democrats to get Tower confirmed. That would produce a 50-50 tie if all 45 Republicans stood by Tower, which is not certain.



Party animal: Tower plays Superman at a Dallas gathering in 1978



Ladies man: attending a dinner with friend Dorothy Heysen

Jobless aliens crowd Los Angeles

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The nation's second-largest city is "saturated" with aliens because of the new immigration law, possibly leading to this week's arrests of 175 suspected illegal immigrants aboard flights to New York, officials said.

"A year ago we'd average five men a night sleeping in our church. We now have 90. We also have 40 women and children in our convent," said the Reverend Gregory Boyle, pastor of Mission Dolores, a Roman Catholic parish that has become a refuge to illegal immigrants from Mexico and Central America.

U.S. Immigration and Naturalisation Service (INS) agents Wednesday arrested 27 more suspected illegal aliens aboard a Piedmont Airlines flight during a stop over flight to New York city.

The journey of the Salvador-

ans, Ecuadorans, Mexicans and Brazilians began with an America West flight from Los Angeles to Phoenix, authorities said.

On Monday, 79 suspected illegal aliens taking an Eastern Airlines flight to New York were arrested during a stop in Atlanta. Late Monday, 69 were arrested while boarding the same flight in Los Angeles.

The 1986 Immigration Control and Reform Act hits employers with sanctions if they hire illegal aliens. On Wednesday, a California farm labour contractor accused of more than 330 violations of the law became the first agricultural business in the nation to be fined under the law.

S-and-A farm contractors of Madera was fined \$153,250 for employing 27 illegal aliens who were arrested during border patrol sweeps in January, said J.

William Carter, chief of the Border Patrol Office in Livermore.

Some officials say the law may be the reason why illegal immigrants are turning away from their longtime destinations of California farms and the sprawling Los Angeles metropolitan area.

Neil Jacobs, the assistant INS director for investigations in Atlanta, described Los Angeles as "literally saturated with aliens," and said word has gotten around that they can't get jobs. Boyle agreed, and said it stems from the immigration law reform.

"My feeling is there is a saturation here," he said, noting that movement into the agricultural San Joaquin valley evaporated months ago.

Smugglers' use of airlines is not new, although it is not considered commonplace. The Charlotte arrests were the third for

that Piedmont flight since October.

"Apparently, they've been using the flight for the last three months pretty regularly," said David Carmichael, INS supervisor in Charlotte.

In the case of the Eastern flights, the INS believes several smugglers were taking advantage of low fares to move the aliens, who are subject to deportation if caught.

"This flight, we are hopeful, will be closed to smugglers of aliens. But we expect there will be other flights in the future," said Donald H. Looney, acting district director of the INS in Los Angeles.

Airlines say they cooperate with the INS but do not have policies of trying to determine if any passengers might be illegal immigrants.

COLUMN

Fugitive rats give themselves up

TOKYO (R) — Two fugitive rats have given themselves up after grounding a Japan Airlines (JAL) 747 for 30 hours by hiding in the cargo hold, a JAL spokesman said Friday. The pair were among 25 laboratory rats imported from New York who ran away after their cage broke open aboard the jumbo jet shortly after it arrived at Tokyo's Narita airport Wednesday night. Frantic searches by airline officials failed to uncover the rodent hideout, but eventually they came out by themselves. "Where were they hiding for over 30 hours? You'd have to ask the rats," the spokesman said. The plane was scheduled to return to New York immediately, but had to be grounded until the two were found, causing a six-hour delay for more than 300 passengers.

Drivers needed on English highway

LONDON (AP) — A truck travelling north from Birmingham in central England spilled thousands of hypodermic needles about a highway Thursday and about 75 drivers later reported flat tires, police said. "The needles were scattered for one to three kilometres but it could have been 15 or 25 kilometres before a motorist noticed his tires going down," said a West Midlands police officer who spoke on condition of anonymity, the usual custom. "We believe we have traced the lorry (truck) driver and he could be charged with damaging other vehicles," said a traffic control police spokesman in Birmingham.

Man suffers from identity crisis

MERRITT ISLAND, Florida (AP) — Sheriff's Deputy Charles White responded skeptically when someone phoned police to report that Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi was dining at a Merritt Island restaurant. But when White and another deputy arrived at the restaurant Sunday night, he quickly spotted the customer who had prompted the call. Michael Belman, 34, was eating quietly with his three-year-old son. "We sat down beside him, and we were just laughing about the whole situation," White said. "He favours (resembles) him." Belman, a Florida jeweler, said his face has gotten him into trouble before. "At times it's fun and at times it's fearful," he said. "I've seen (Qadhafi) on TV just a few times. We do favour each other quite a bit."

Winfrey gets into modeling

NEW YORK (AP) — Oprah Winfrey, called an "unforgettable woman" in a new cosmetics advertisement, says she hopes the designation will inspire young blacks. "As a child, it never occurred to me I might be considered beautiful. Because none of the models looked like me," Winfrey said Tuesday in the newspaper USA Today. "If just one little black girl sees the photo and thinks she's beautiful because she sees a part of herself in me, I will be grateful." A photo composite by Richard Avedon of the newly slim, leotard-clad talk-show host appears in the magazine "W" with a dozen more magazines to follow. Winfrey was chosen because of a beauty that is "heightened by her intelligence and softened by her warmth and good humour," said Revlon Chairman Ronald O. Perleman. Liza Minnelli, Brooke Shields and Audrey Hepburn preceded Winfrey as "unforgettable women" in the advertising campaign.

Authorities seek to break up 'marriage'

PEKING (AP) — Two men, one a former soldier and the other a farmer, married each other recently in a traditional ceremony in rural China, according to an official report. Local authorities are now trying to break up the "marriage" and the ex-soldier, who has acknowledged he is a homosexual, has been fired from his job, the weekly Press Digest (Baokan Wenzhai) said in a report seen Friday. Ye Xing, 26, a decorated four-year veteran of the People's Liberation Army, played the role of the bride in his Jan. 10 marriage to Li Linxing, 30, the weekly said. Nearly 100 friends and relatives were invited to the ceremony and banquet in a rural area of coastal Fujian province, the weekly said. The township government and the department of public health are now trying to separate the two and Ye was fired from his job, but they are still living together with Li's family, the weekly said.